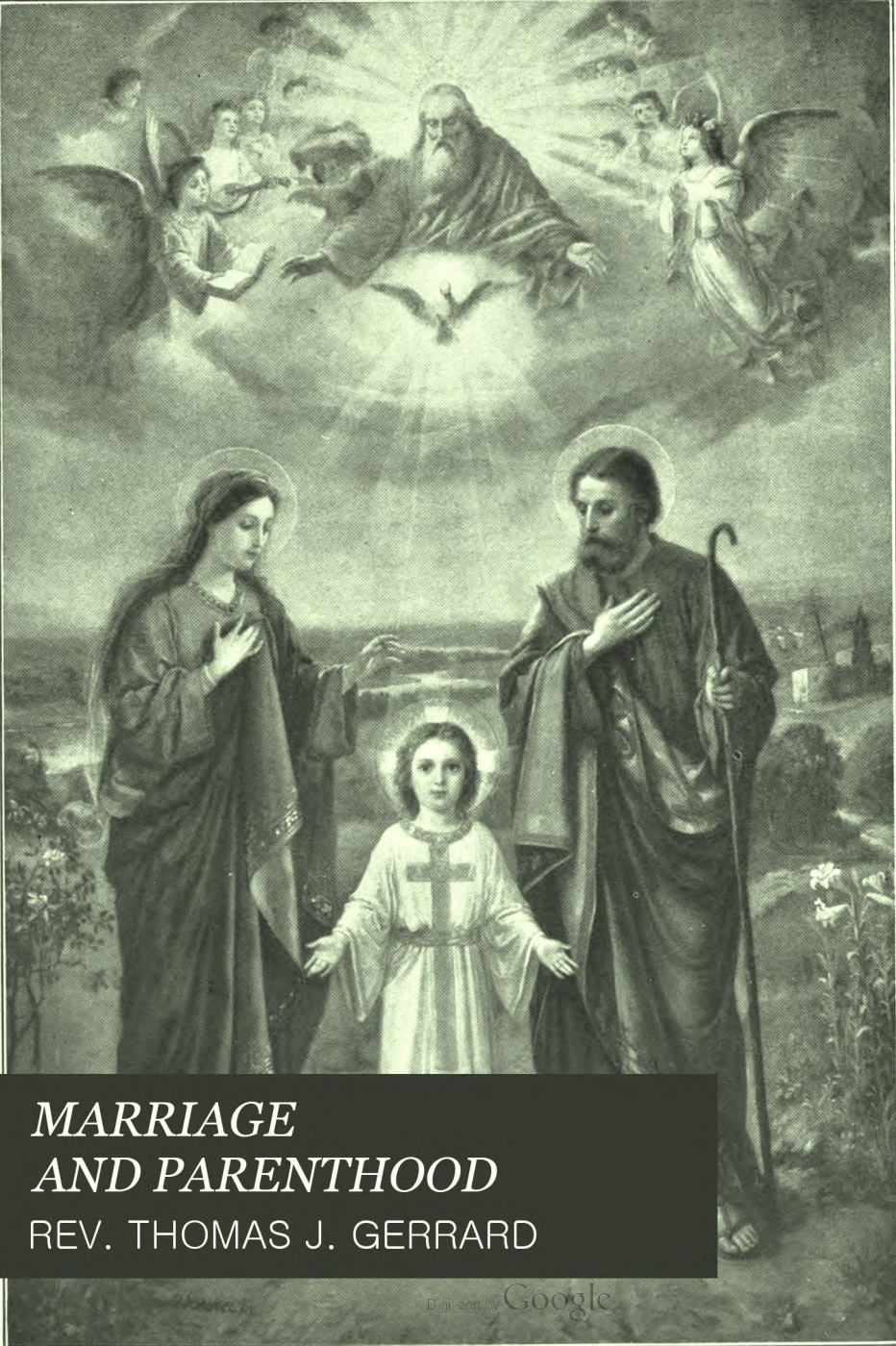

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MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD



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MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

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MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

The Catholic Social

BY THE

REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

AUTHOR OF

"SCANDALS OF ALABAMA," "THE WALKER VISUAL," ETC.

JOSEPH F. WALKER

NEW YORK

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MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD

The Catholic Ideal

BY THE

REV. THOMAS J. GERRARD

AUTHOR OF

"CORDS OF ADAM," "THE WAYFARER'S VISION," ETC.

JOSEPH F. WAGNER

NEW YORK

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Archbishop of New York

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NOTE TO REVISED EDITION

I BEG to express my grateful acknowledgments to the large number of clergy, medical men, and parents who have so kindly favored me with most valuable criticisms and suggestions. And I desire to make special mention of Surgeon-General Maunsell, C.B., who as President of the Guild of Sts. Luke, Cosmas, and Damian, has been able to secure for me such a wealth of expert opinion. Here and there I have been unable to follow even a very weighty authority, not, however, because I set my own judgment against it, but because it appears to me to be outweighed by a consensus of equally grave authorities. Some few ideas, too, I have decided to omit as pertaining rather to another book which I have in preparation on the attitude of the Church towards the Eugenic movement.

THE AUTHOR.

Marriage and Parenthood

The Catholic Ideal



INTRODUCTION

A MAN thinks he is very clever if he can make an aëroplane. Thóusands of other men think he is a genius if he can fly over the Alps, even though at the end of the journey he break his neck. But these are paltry trifles compared with the work of training a soul for the kingdom of God. Such a task needs the genius of the Catholic Church.

Amongst her many helps for this purpose not the least important is the Sacrament of marriage. The ideal which she holds before the world and the power which she gives for the realizing of such ideal stand out as the chief hope for the salvation of modern society. On every side we see influences at work which tend to break up the family and consequently to break up society. The increase of divorce, the falling off in the birth-rate, the spread of the white slave traffic, — these

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are a few of the more obvious symptoms which follow upon a low ideal of the marriage bond.

That there is something wrong is admitted on all hands, as is proved by the attempts to mend matters. The Divorce Commission at present sitting in London is an evidence of such unrest. The formation of the Eugenics Education Society is another. In these movements, however, the Catholic student detects a lack of the knowledge of foundation principles. Most of the remedies proposed are a tinkering with the symptom rather than a treatment of the root cause.

Here and there, however, the value of the Catholic ideal asserts itself. Thus, for instance, in the evidence before the Divorce Commission, Sir John Bigham, then President of the Divorce Court, said: "My experience shows me that members of the Roman Catholic Church seldom come to our court, and I attribute that fact to the great influence of their priesthood, and to the respect which is inculcated amongst Roman Catholics for the marriage vow."

Another witness, Dr. Glynn Whittle, of Liverpool, bore magnificent testimony to the fidelity of the Catholic poor. Speaking as he did in favor of divorce, there was a double weight in his words. He said he had questioned countless poor

women, victims of habitual cruelty, as to whether they would avail themselves of divorce if they could get it. The answers had been most impressive. Protestants said "Yes"; Roman Catholics said "No." He could not recall a single Protestant exception.

What is the cause of this grand steadfastness amongst Catholics and of weak changeableness amongst their Protestant neighbors? A member of the Council of the Eugenics Society shall make answer. Writing in a London journal¹ he says: "Marriage, like other natural and necessary relations, is sacred. Only in Catholicism is it a Sacrament; in scientific sociology the term is meaningless. . . . Protestantism will have none of it. The Reformation, in this as in other points a revolt from Catholicism, expressly declared that marriage is not a Sacrament, that it is essentially a secular matter."

For the present disastrous state of affairs, then, we have to thank the system which for three hundred years has proclaimed the denial that marriage is a Sacrament. But, as we have seen, the leaven of truth is still working. The preaching and the practice of the sacramental ideal with all its implications is to be the leaven of the whole

¹ *Daily Dispatch*, Nov. 11, 1910.

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mass. To promote and foster this ideal is the aim of the following pages.

It is also hoped that a re-statement of the Catholic ideal, in the face of modern ideals to the contrary, will tend to increase the happiness of Catholic family life. We cannot shut our eyes to the many failures. In all cases they are due either to ignorance of the ideal or to a refusal of its graces. They may be traced largely to the fact that false views of marriage and parenthood do make their way into Catholic homes. These views concern the most intimate, the most delicate, and the most sacred marriage relationships. The protective modesty, so natural to a good conscience, has been carried too far, and false doctrine has been able to make headway simply because the true was not present to resist it.

Now reticence in these matters is a very strong protection against temptation. But there is some knowledge which we must have. Some people require more, others can do with less. I acknowledge that I have found the greatest difficulty in deciding what must be left out of this book. What has been retained has been retained by advice of authority much more competent than myself. If knowledge in these matters is needful then that knowledge must be acquired and we must trust to

grace to keep us from abusing it. No less an authority than St. Clement of Alexandria has said: "Be not ashamed to know what God was not ashamed to make."

Let it be admitted at once that isolated points of this doctrine may seem harsh and unkind to the individual. At the same time let it be remembered that the Church is an expert in human nature and that by her divine guidance she can see further than the individual. When under her direction the larger vision has been gained, when through painful experience the lesson has been learnt, then will Mother Church be discovered to be right after all. What a man loses as an individual, through keeping the Church's laws, he gains as a member of a world-wide society; what he loses in a portion of life he gains in the whole of life, yea a thousandfold in the life eternal.

The Church guards a divine ideal, — that is why she is always right. A nation's decadence consists not so much in the actual lowering of its moral life, as in the lowering of its ideal. If it preserves its ideal there is hope of its resurrection. But if it calls good bad and bad good, then its doom is sealed.

I have to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Gideon W. B. Marsh, Fellow of the Royal So-

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ciety of Medicine, and Vice-President of the Guild of Sts. Luke, Cosmas, and Damian, for valuable suggestions regarding the medical side of the subject. I have tried to avoid all topics that do not involve moral principles. These must be sought elsewhere. Unfortunately many books, most excellent from the medical and nursing point of view, contain directions, here and there, contrary to Catholic principles. If they are to be used without harm, therefore, they must be read with caution and duly corrected according to the reader's knowledge of the Catholic ideal.

THOMAS J. GERRARD.

NEW HALL, CHELMSFORD,
Feast of the Nativity, 1910.

CHAPTER I

INSTITUTION AND PURPOSE

ONE of the most remarkable phenomena of the social life of the new century is the movement among womankind for a readjustment of the relations between man and woman. The movement affects all spheres of life. It makes most noise in the sphere of politics. But as the affairs of the State have their root in the affairs of the family, it is to the family that we must look for the cause of the disturbance. There would seem to be something wrong with many of the current ideas concerning the relationship between husband and wife. The fact indeed is that in many quarters the Catholic ideal of the great Sacrament of matrimony has become obscured. The protective love of the husband toward the wife has been changed into a tyrannical overlordship. The loving acquiescence in that protection on the part of the wife has been construed into a servile obedience. The outrage on both nature and grace has rendered the mutual life irksome beyond endurance, and consequently

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ideas have become prevalent which tell both against the sanctity of the marriage state and against the indissolubility of its bond. Let us see then what the Church has to say about this wondrous mystery.

The very institution of marriage has its reason in the weakness and insufficiency of man. God, although supremely happy in the company of His own blessed Trinity, had willed to exercise His love outside Himself. He had willed to produce a created world in which there should be one class of creatures bearing His own likeness.

After separating the night from the day, and the land from the water, after making the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the cattle of the earth, He made man to rule over the earth. He made man a reasonable being, capable of giving a reasonable service. But even with all the delights of that paradise of pleasure, with all his unimpaired intelligence and power of ordaining things for God's glory, man by himself was not enough for God's purpose. There were parts in God's great design which man by himself could not accomplish. He was wanting in both physical, mental, and moral complements. So God said: "It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself." So God cast Adam

into a deep sleep, took a rib from his side from which He built a woman. And when God brought the woman to the man, then did Adam say: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." Having been thus made for each other and united to each other, they then received the message of God as to the end for which all these things had been arranged. "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."

The formation of Adam and Eve and their union in the matrimonial bond had, however, a very much wider significance than the mere multiplication of human beings and the replenishment of the earth. God, when He created them, had also in His mind His own Incarnation and His Church. The institution of matrimony was to be a kind of prophecy of His Incarnation and a figure of His Church. As Adam was made weak so that Eve might be given to him to be his strength, so the Son of God became weak, emptying Himself of Himself so that He might take upon Himself the form of a servant and, clothed in flesh, might accomplish the strong victory over sin and

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death. As Eve was taken from the side of Adam as he slept, and became the mother of all living, so was the Church taken from the side of Christ as He slept upon the Cross, and became for Him His chosen spouse, the Mother of all those to whom He had come to give life.

The state of marriage, therefore, as reflected in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Church is seen to have the high function not only of procreating human beings to replenish the earth, but also of training them in the higher life of grace and thus preparing them for the still higher life of glory. Christ came into the world solely to save sinners. The end of the Church is merely the salvation of souls. If, therefore, matrimony is a figure of the Incarnation and the Church, then its chief end is the population of heaven with immortal souls.

Seeing, then, that the chief end of matrimony is so high and noble, the means ordained for the accomplishment of that end must be proportionately high and noble. And so we find that nature has provided such means. These may be summed up in the two properties of marriage, its unity and its indissolubility.

And if we would probe further into the mystery and find the common source of these properties of

marriage we discern it in that all-attractive beauty of the state, conjugal love. The mere procreation of children could not possibly be the end of matrimony; for this could be done without the bond, without the unity, without the perpetuity, without the love. Manifestly, then, the chief reason for the institution of matrimony was the welfare of the offspring, not merely the existence of the offspring, but its growth and development, the promotion of all its interests. Therefore it was that God so made man and woman that they should love each other, that they should foster that love and concentrate it on each other by excluding all other love of the same kind, that they should make it so strong and lasting that only death should be able to bring about a breach of the union.

All this points to the fact that the marriage bond is a law of nature. It is a mutual agreement by which a man and a woman give themselves to each other until death, and this chiefly for the sake of the highest interest of the children which shall be born to them.

Its natural perfection, however, in course of time became corrupted. Impurity then, even as now, led to hardness of heart. Consequently Moses allowed divorce. The Pharisees, knowing this, brought it as an objection to Our Lord's

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teaching. Our Lord, however, was able to quote an earlier and more fundamental law. "Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." Moses had taken into consideration the hardness of their hearts and for the sake of preventing greater evils had permitted them to put away their wives. "But," Our Lord reminded them, "from the beginning it was not so."

In this, as in many other matters, God had a greater design in view. He desired to provide a remedy for all this irregular life by raising the natural state of marriage to a supernatural plane. Forbidding divorce and insisting on the essential unity and indissolubility of the marriage tie, Christ raised it to the dignity of a Sacrament. Thus it became a more perfect figure of the Incarnation and the Church. Through the union of the Godhead and the Manhood, Christ in His human nature was filled with all grace and knowledge compatible with His created nature. Through the union of Christ with the Church, the Church is sanctified as His one perfect and unspotted bride. So likewise through the union of man and woman in the Sacrament of matrimony, there is conferred

on them all the graces needful to enable them to carry out the arduous duties of that state. "Husbands," says St. Paul, "love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life. . . . So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. This is a great Sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church."

When St. Paul speaks of marriage being a great Sacrament he does not use the word in the strict sense in which we use it now. He means merely that it is a great sign of something sacred, a mystical symbol of the union between Christ and His Church. Nevertheless, on account of the similarity of the marriage bond to the bond between Christ and His Church, we are able to gather that marriage is a Sacrament in the strictest sense of the word. The union between Christ and His Church consists of sanctifying grace. It consists further of a continual flow of all those graces which are needful for attaining the Church's end, namely, the salvation of all the souls for whom the Church was instituted. If, therefore, the marriage bond is like the bond between Christ and His Church, it must be the means by which graces

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sanctifying the marriage state are conferred. A Sacrament of the new law is a sacred sign instituted by Christ to signify and to confer grace. If, therefore, the marriage bond signifies and confers the graces needful for the marriage state, and if instituted by Christ, then it is one of the seven Sacraments of the new law. So it was then that Christ placed His divine seal on the natural contract and with His own lips proclaimed it henceforth to be a bond forged in heaven. "What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

From the fact that Christ raised the natural contract into a Sacrament, it follows that the parties to the contract are the ministers of the Sacrament. It is the man and woman who hand themselves over to each other making a mutual contract to live together till death. It is the man and woman, therefore, who confer on each other the Sacrament enabling them to fulfil the higher duties which are involved in the Christian married state. The priest is not the minister of the Sacrament, but only the witness of it. Our late Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, emphasized this when he insisted that the contract and the Sacrament were not two separate things. "The distinction, or rather separation," he said, "cannot be approved of; since it is clear that in Christian matrimony the contract

is not separable from the Sacrament, and consequently that a true and lawful contract cannot exist without being by that very fact a Sacrament. For Christ Our Lord endowed matrimony with the sacramental dignity; but matrimony is the contract itself, provided that the contract is rightly made.

. . . Therefore, it is plain that every true marriage among Christians is in itself and by itself a Sacrament; and that nothing is further from the truth than that the Sacrament is a sort of added ornament or quality introduced from without, which may be detached from the contract at the discretion of man." ¹ If, therefore, the Sacrament is the mutual contract, it is the woman, who, as God's minister, confers on the man those soul beauties which make him a figure of Christ, the bridegroom of the Church; and so likewise is it the man who, as God's minister, confers on the woman those soul beauties, which make her a figure of the Church, the bride of Christ. Husband and wife are thus seen to be the complement of each other in their supernatural, as well as in their natural, relationships.

It is well to keep this supernatural aspect of the case prominently before our minds when we consider the duties and obligations of the state. The

¹ Leo XIII, Encyc. *Arcanum*.

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end for which marriage was instituted was a most difficult end to attain. Indeed, it were an impossible task without the special divine helps provided. Remembering these helps, however, the married couple may face their difficulties with a good heart. The sacramental effect of matrimony does not spend itself out within a week or two of the nuptial ceremony. The grace conferred on the wedding morning remains with them when they leave the church, remains with them in their home life, fortifies them in their discouragements, and steels their wills to the emergencies of every difficult situation.

The Church then, having made this clear to them, sets aside all false modesty and tells them in grave and plain language what their duties are. The first duty is the bringing of children into the world and the educating of them in the service of God; the second duty is mutual love and service in the companionship of domestic life. In the nuptial Mass the priest solemnly prays over them that they may be fruitful in their offspring and that they may see their children's children unto the third and fourth generation. And finally in his exhortation he warns them to be faithful to each other, and to remain chaste at special times of prayer, during the fasts and solemn seasons of the Church.

Now all this involves much trouble and anxiety both on the part of the husband and of the wife. With the former lies the paramount obligation of working for the sustenance of the household; with the latter lie all the cares of child-bearing; with both lies that anxiety for the temporal and spiritual well-being of each other and of the children. "But if thou take a wife," says St. Paul, "thou hast not sinned. But if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned; nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh." Those who enter this state, therefore, should do so with their eyes wide open to the fact that it is a life fraught with difficulty and that both man and woman are supposed to be willing to bear grave inconveniences. When a man complains of his loss of liberty or the increased burden on his pocket; or when a woman complains of the troubles of children, there has evidently been some radical misunderstanding as to the end of the institution of marriage and of its burdens. What is needed on those occasions is the consideration that marriage is a Sacrament, — a Sacrament which is a channel of divine strength to bear the burden, of divine light to see the way out of the difficulties, of divine refreshment for the constant renewal of conjugal life and love.

CHAPTER II

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE

It is part of God's providence that when He sets before us an end to be attained He provides us also with the means of attaining that end. So in the case of marriage, having ordained it for the high purpose of preparing souls for heaven, God has endowed it with qualities which make it an apt instrument for the purpose for which it was instituted. These qualities are revealed in the truth of Christ and the Church. Christ's Church was to be one only, and it was to last until the end of time. The bond of Christian marriage must likewise be one only and must last until broken by death. Unity and perpetuity are the qualities which make the marriage state specially fitted for the great object of bringing children into the world, of nourishing them in body, mind, and spirit, of bringing them to the final perfection for which man was created. If the bringing of children into the world is attended with great pain and labor, the bringing of their souls to perfection is attended

with still greater pain and labor. It requires nothing else than the united life and love of both parents.

Now such is the nature of man and woman that they cannot love effectually with a divided love. Let either partner give the other the slightest cause for jealousy and there is an end of that perfect love and harmony in the family which is so needful for the well-being of the children. The archetype of perfect love is the mutual love of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity. One of the fairest created reflections of that love is the triple love of family life, the love of husband, wife, and child. It will brook no intrusion from without. It cannot bear the prospect of it coming to an end. This is a fundamental and universal law of nature, a law of nature which is accentuated, ennobled, and made perfect by a law of grace. The Sacrament of matrimony implies a special divine sanction to the laws of unity and perpetuity in the marriage bond.

The need of the higher sanction and help is seen from the passing nature of the merely natural charms. The mere physical pleasures pass away with their satisfaction. Youthful ardor burns out before the mature part of life is reached. In the course of a life so intimate as that of husband

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and wife many faults of character become exposed. Marriage certainly brings a revelation of many new beauties of character, but it also brings a revelation of many faults of character. It is fraught with disappointments even as with agreeable surprises. The fading of bodily beauty also tends to weaken the natural bond. When the hair turns gray, and the eye loses its luster, and the features fall into wrinkles; when the general buoyancy and ardor of youth tones down into the prose of middle age; then indeed is there need of something more sustaining, something more lasting than the mere tie of natural affection or natural contract. It is found in the unity and perpetuity of the Sacrament. The Sacrament imparts all the courage, the energy, the refreshment, and the love needful to make the bond strong and lasting. It renews the youth of married life and makes it satisfying even in spite of years.

The Church claims to have the care of this Sacrament. The Church, therefore, has ever insisted on its unity and perpetuity. The Church regards the sin of adultery as something infinitely more heinous than any sin possible among the unmarried. The father who has to provide for his children must be certain that they are his own. He cares for them only on the supposition that they

are his offspring. Any infidelity, therefore, on the part of the woman must of necessity tend to break up these sacred family relationships. A father cannot love and care for children who may be those of the man who has done him the greatest possible injury. And if a woman gives unswerving fidelity to her husband she has a right to claim an equal fidelity in return. Infidelity on the part of the man, although it does not act directly in rendering the offspring of the family uncertain, yet it strikes at the root of conjugal love, and thus almost directly at the foundations of family life. A violation of the sanctity of marriage then by either party is a double violation of God's law, a violation of chastity, and a violation of justice. Hence, we have the most stringent laws against adultery, against polygamy, and against divorce.

Among the Jews the penalty of adultery was death by stoning. In the most savage races of the earth its punishment is immediate death. The law of Christ makes the law of nature and the law of Moses more perfect. This it does by all the conditions and rules which it lays down for the prevention of polygamy and divorce. By polygamy we usually understand the possession of two wives at the same time. The possession of two husbands at the same time is known as polyandry.

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Both are equally condemned by the Christian law.

The cases of polygamy among the Jews are frequently quoted by those who want an excuse for disregarding the laws of Christian marriage. Attention must be paid to the circumstances of time and race. If polygamy was permitted then it was for a special reason. And the permission was mere toleration. The circumstances of the times required that it should be permitted in order to avoid greater evils. Nevertheless, God did not cease to give signs to His people as to what was the great ideal. The most wondrous love song ever sung by man was that inspired by the Holy Spirit, the song of songs, which tells of the love between one bridegroom and one bride, the love which lasts till death. "One is my dove, my perfect one is but one. . . . I to my beloved and my beloved to me, who feedest among the anemones. . . . Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell, the lamps thereof are fire and flames. . . . My beloved to me and I to him who feedeth among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows flee away." So the young Tobias could say to his wife Sara: "For we are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together

like heathens that know not God." In praying to God for a blessing on his marriage he referred back to its original conditions: "Thou madest Adam of the slime of the earth, and gavest him Eve for a helper. And now, Lord, thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which Thy name may be blessed forever and ever." And Sara prayed with him: "Have mercy on us, and let us grow old both together in health."

Further, the Church, although she insists that the marriage bond lasts only till death, although she allows remarriage after the death of one of the partners, yet she looks upon such remarriage as something less perfect. Her ideal is that a marriage should be so distinctly one and perpetual as to exclude any other marriage even after the first has been dissolved by death. A marriage is not merely a union of two in one flesh, but also of two in one spirit. The more perfect thing, therefore, would be to consider the bond of love lasting right through death. The reason why the Church allows remarriage after the death of one of the partners is because there are other ends of matrimony besides mutual love. To give expression to her wish, however, and to mark the distinction between the more perfect state and the less perfect

state, the Church does not give the nuptial blessing in cases where the bride is a widow if she has received it in a previous marriage. She gives it where the bride is being married for the first time, even though the bridegroom be a widower. Having regard to the dignity of the bride, the Church in this case overlooks the defect in the bridegroom. Her end is achieved by withholding the blessing only in the case of the marriage of widows, as stated above.

This brings us to the all-important question of divorce. If both the natural and divine laws maintain the unity and perpetuity of the marriage bond, then no power on earth, not even the Church, has power to grant a divorce. "What, therefore, God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Here, on the threshold of the question it is necessary to make a clear distinction of terms.

When it is said that no power on earth can grant a divorce, divorce must be understood in a particular and strict sense of the word. Let us distinguish then between three kinds of separation. First, there is a separation which implies that the husband and wife are allowed to live apart. It is called in juridical language a judicial separation. It is called in theological language *separatio a mensa et thoro*, or separation from bed and board.

THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE 25

Its meaning is that, although the parties are separated from each other, yet they are not free to marry again. If they were allowed to marry again the separation would be said to be *a vinculo*, or separation from the bond. The actual contract or tie would be broken. Now the first kind of separation is allowed by the Church whenever there is a grave reason, such, for instance, as the misconduct of one of the parties. But the second kind the Church allows never. The bond which has been made by God may not be broken by man. One of the parties may forfeit certain rights of marriage through infidelity to the partner, but can never thereby acquire the freedom to marry again.

And further, the Church makes no distinction in this respect between the innocent party and the guilty. A bond is a bond, the contract is a two-sided one, and, therefore, as long as the bond or contract remains it must bind both the parties. However unfair it may seem to the innocent party, yet it is God's law and God will see to it that those who observe His law, will, in the final balancing, receive their just reward.

Then there is another kind of separation which is frequently believed to be a divorce and which is a source of much perplexity to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. It is called a declaration of

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nullity. It means that that which has appeared to be a marriage is declared never to have been a marriage from the beginning. The parties have gone through the ceremony, but there has been some obstruction in the way which has prevented the knot from being tied and so the supposed marriage must be declared null and void.

Let us take an instance. A Jew married to a baptized Christian wife seeks for a divorce in the law courts. He is successful in his suit. Then he becomes a Catholic, falls in love with a Catholic girl, and wishes to be married to her in the Catholic Church. There is no difficulty, the Church approves of the marriage. What has happened? The undiscerning public think that the Church has approved of divorce and of the remarriage of a divorced person. And if the man happens to have been a wealthy Jew the undiscerning public is not slow to attribute unworthy motives to the Church. But again, what has really happened? The Jew's first marriage was really no marriage at all in the sight of the Church. Baptism is the first Sacrament and the door of the other Sacrament. The Jew had not received the Sacrament of baptism and so was incapable of receiving the Sacrament of marriage. And being unbaptized he was furthermore incapable of making the contract of

making the contract of marriage, for the Sacrament is the contract. Therefore, the marriage which, by the law of the land, was declared to be dissolved was by the law of the Church declared never to have existed, to have been null and void from the beginning. Consequently, when the Jew became a Catholic and received the Sacrament of baptism he was quite free and capable of uniting himself with the partner of his choice.

There are three exceptions to the law of indissolubility. The first two concern marriages ratified but not consummated. Such may be dissolved either by papal dispensation for some grave reason, or by the solemn, religious profession of one of the parties. The third is known as the Pauline privilege. It may happen only in a marriage between unbelievers, and this even when consummated. If one of the parties is converted to the Christian faith, and the other refuses to live peaceably, or shows contempt for God and religion, or tries to pervert the faithful partner, then the faithful one has a right to a real divorce (I Cor. vii, 15).

Within these limitations the Church is absolutely inexorable against any attempt at separation from the bond. She has suffered the loss of whole nations from the faith rather than sacrifice

one jot or tittle of her principle. The care of the Sacrament has been committed to her keeping, and to have condoned a denial of the sacramental nature of the matrimonial bond, even in one case, would have been to renounce the divine charge given to her. For the English-speaking world the Pope's firmness, in refusing to grant a divorce to Henry VIII, must ever be a monument of the fidelity of the Church to the sanctity of the marriage state. And the famous Encyclical of the late Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII, must ever remain the character of woman's dignity and safety as to her marriage right. "The great evils," wrote the Pontiff, "of which divorce is the spring can hardly be enumerated. When the conjugal bond loses its immutability we may expect to see benevolence and affection destroyed between husband and wife; an encouragement given to infidelity; the protection and education of children rendered more difficult; the germs of discord sown between families; woman's dignity disowned; the danger for her of seeing herself forsaken, after having served as the instrument of man's passions. And as nothing ruins families and destroys the most powerful kingdoms like the corruption of manners, it is easy to see that divorce, which is only begotten of the depraved manners of a

people, is the worst enemy of families and of States, and that it opens the door, as experience attests, to the most vicious habits, both in private and in public life."

Views subversive of the Catholic ideal are now very prevalent, and are becoming day by day more prevalent. In the matter of the sanctity of marriage, as in many other things, it is the Catholics who are the salt of the earth. Whilst other religious bodies are prepared to give way under any specious pretext which may arise, the See of Peter proclaims the principle of no compromise. And when the Churches which ought to guard the sanctity of marriage show themselves weak and accommodating to the lower pleasures of man, we must not be surprised if non-religious bodies speak openly in favor of divorce and, all unashamed, make profession of free love. This, indeed, has come to pass.

High time is it, then, for Catholics to make their voice heard in protest. Nay, absolutely imperative is it that Catholics should rally themselves anew with even greater loyalty around the Holy Father who watches the marriage Sacrament so anxiously and sees its dangers so clearly. Legislation is made which may be irksome; but the irksomeness thereby suffered is trifling compared with

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the irksomeness thereby avoided. Let us admit boldly that the marriage state is fraught with difficulties, that love is liable to grow cold, that child-bearing is a burden, that the education of many children is a tax on the family's resources, that a drunken husband is an almost intolerable nuisance, that a gossiping wife is a plague of a life; let us admit all this, but at the same time insist that the Sacrament of marriage has power either to prevent or mitigate the evils. It restrains the passions. But let the idea of divorce once get established and there is an end of restraint. The passions are let loose and fall victim to every little counter-attraction to family life. The half-hearted partner who realizes that there is an easy escape from the burden of married life makes no serious attempt to bear it. Then comes the sad spectacle of a mother left alone with a house full of children and no father to provide for them; or what is perhaps even more sad, a father with a house full of children and no mother to take care of them. The Church's laws may be hard to bear at times. They are, however, as the yoke of Christ, sweet and easy to bear, if only we spread them out over the short run of life.

CHAPTER III

CHOICE OF A STATE

How is it that nearly the whole of the creative literature of the world has been made to center round the young girl? How is it that love stories about married people, widows, and widowers, have such a prosaic savor and so often tend towards degeneracy? It is because there is something mysterious in virginity. There is a power hidden in the virgin mind which can change the destinies of men, of nations, of the race. Shall this power be divided, ministering to the procreation of body and education of soul? Or shall it renounce the carnal part and be devoted exclusively to the care of the spirit?

These questions are very old, perhaps as old as the human race itself; for there is some reason to believe that the sins of our first parents had something to do with the vow of virginity. At any rate we know that in the earliest Roman times the problem faced the maidens of the family. Vesta was the goddess of the hearth. But family wor-

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ship was not enough. A special sanctuary was needed where all the citizens of the State could worship as one great family. The goddess was there represented by an eternal fire burning on her hearth or altar. And virgins were set aside to keep alive this fire. The goddess was chaste and pure, as the fire symbolized. The virginity of the priestesses both figured and realized that purity. Thus, even in natural religion virginity was regarded as a higher type of spirit life.

When God became incarnate He added a higher sanctity to virginity by choosing to be born of a Virgin. By the same act too he raised the dignity of motherhood. Both states of life were needed for the perfection of His plans. Some would be called to one state, others to the other. Christ Himself declared that renunciation of marriage was more blessed than fruition, provided it was done for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Not every one could receive that word, but he who could, let him.

St. Paul applied this doctrine when he said: "He that giveth his virgin in marriage doeth well, and he that giveth her not doeth better."

In biblical language the term "virgin" includes men as well as women. Thus St. John in the Apocalypse says: "These are they who were not

defiled with women: for they are virgins." In modern language we speak of the men as celibates. The Council of Trent uses both words in defining that single blessedness is the higher gift. "If any one says that the married state is to be placed before that of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not a better and more blessed thing to remain in virginity or celibacy than to be joined in matrimony, let him be anathema."

The virginity or celibacy here spoken of is not necessarily that of the ecclesiastical or religious life. The Church recognizes three normal states of life: marriage, which is good; single blessedness in the world, which is better; single blessedness in religion, which is best.

This does not mean, however, that the single life is better for everybody, nor that the religious life is the best for everybody. These states are only good, better, and best, when regarded in themselves. If we look at them with regard to particular people, the order of good, better, and best may be reversed. Indeed, for the vast majority of people marriage is by far the best thing. The single life in the world would maim them, and perhaps life in religion would ruin them. Everything depends on the individual's circumstances, his temperament, his health, his ability, his desires, above

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all his graces. This then is the problem with which all young people are confronted: To what state of life am I called?

Let us say at the outset that the solution is love.

But what is love? Its mystic nature defies an exhaustive description. There is, however, a simple definition which may be applied to every kind of love. It is: To will good for some one. This is the essence of love, whether of father, mother, husband, wife, child, friend, or enemy. It may be accompanied by the passion of affection or by the passion of aversion. If I love my mother, affection is also present. If I love my enemy, aversion is probably present. I may *feel* a dislike to a man, yet at the same time *will* to do him good.

Further, love may be devoid, or almost devoid, of passion. I may have a love for the religious life, for instance, without having any affection for it. I may see that only by entering religion shall I be able to do the greatest good to my fellow men. Even though I have an aversion for common life and loss of liberty, yet I may see in those things my best chance of salvation and love them accordingly.

In the choice of a state of life then the leading question will be: Which state do I really love?

Do I want to be married? Do I want to live singly in the world and devote myself to a special profession? Do I want to be a priest? Do I want to be a nun? Above all, is my desire constant, or do I waver between one thing and another, never knowing my own mind?

Marriage will be the choice of most. It is the state for which they are by nature fitted, and *for them* the highest and most perfect life which they can live.

In most cases the choice is settled by a chance meeting and by the accident known as falling in love. Mutual passion for each other is the predominant attractive force. If this passion is consonant with reason and revelation then it is all good and beautiful. If there are impediments to the proposed marriage then the passion is out of place and must be checked. Passion cannot be good if it has for its object that which tends to the ruin of the end of marriage. But the impediments placed by God and by the Church are all arranged to protect the end of marriage, and therefore passion must never seek to override them.

The case, however, often arises in which only one of the pair feels the passion. What is the other to do? Suppose it to be the girl, and suppose her mind to be expressed by some such saying

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as this: "I like him, you know, but I cannot say that I am in love with him."

There is need here to distinguish between love and passion. Love is essentially an act of the will; passion is essentially a mere sensation. Let us repeat, though, that the most perfect love for married people is that in which the will is fired by passion and in which the passion is controlled by the will. But let us never forget that the lasting element in such love is that of the will. Passion burns out in time.

The girl then who is in every way fitted for marriage receives an offer from a young man who is in many ways suitable. She feels that she can honor and respect him, but hesitates about accepting him because she does not *feel* in love. If she is young and likely to have other chances she may wait. But if she is likely to become an old maid then she may fortify herself with the philosophical distinction between love and passion. If she believes that the man will do all he can to make her happy, and she is determined to do all she can to make him happy, she will be well advised to marry him. Good will is the real stuff of which love is made, passion is but an added perfection. Moreover, the good will in such cases invariably rouses the passion before the days of courtship are ended.

On the part of the man the doubt is hardly ever as to whether he is in love or not, nor yet as to whether he is called to marriage or the Church. He usually knows quite well what he wants. He doubts only his power of fulfilling the obligations of the new state of life.

In regard to marriage he is afraid he cannot afford to keep a wife. The number is growing of those young men who abstain from marriage in order that they may have the pleasure of trifling luxuries. They prefer to be free for the joys of cigarettes and billiards rather than undertake the burden of marriage with its greater joys. Such a choice is nothing but low, unworthy selfishness.

More important, however, is the case where the young man finds the single life a constant temptation to impurity. Then must he seriously turn his attention to marriage as to his salvation. "It is better to marry than to burn." And it is best of all to marry early, before bad habits are formed. The number of unhappy homes, caused through youthful indiscretion before marriage, is appalling. It were better therefore to marry, even with poverty in prospect, than to lead a single life continually tempted and perhaps continually falling.

Vocations to the celibate life usually begin to show themselves before the age adapted to mar-

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riage. Parents need to know that such a vocation is a special gift of God. Its chief sign is a spontaneous and constant desire. Two dangers are to be avoided. Parents must not force the idea of the priesthood or of the cloister on their children. Nor on the other hand must they suppress it when it appears. Indeed, they will be on the lookout for the signs of zeal and piety which accompany the desire, so that the vocation may have every chance of coming to maturity. It is a great privilege to be able to offer a child for the special service of God.

There is a prevalent impression in many Catholic families that there are only two callings for girls, either to get married or to become a nun. Now such is not Catholic teaching. There is an impression too that the single state outside marriage or religion is something lower than either. Neither is that Catholic teaching. On this point the Church is in full sympathy with the age. She sanctions and encourages a career for certain women in a life of single blessedness without the cloistral vows. And more, she provides the means in her Sacraments by which such a life is lived to its highest perfection.

I think the origin of confusion in regard to the Church's teaching comes from misunderstanding

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her practice as to the taking of vows. She strongly discourages the taking of any vow, and especially the vow of virginity, outside a religious order or congregation. There is not the same protection for it in the world as there is in religion. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, and the Eucharist are all-powerful against the temptation to incontinency, but they are by no means proof against the desire for the Sacrament of matrimony. The practice of spiritual directors therefore is to recommend not a vow but a resolution.

Thus if a girl makes a resolution to lead a single life outside religion, and afterwards receives an offer of marriage which she wants to accept, then there is no difficulty whatever in changing her resolution. Whereas, if she were under a vow she would have to make serious efforts to keep the vow, and could only be dispensed from it on the understanding that she could not possibly keep it.

If, however, this single life in the world be adopted, it must be adopted for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Nor does this mean that it must be lived in continuous contemplation, or in continuous slumming. A certain amount of contemplative prayer will be included in it, and, if one has time and opportunity, a certain amount of slumming or similar charitable work will be helpful to

it. What is meant, however, is that the life shall be lived at least in a state of grace and that effort shall be made towards spiritual perfection.

The renunciation of marriage implies power to remain chaste, and involves the duty of availing one's self of the means to do so. Religion is the only reliable help. We carry our treasure in frail vessels. The flesh lusteth against the spirit. Therefore the spirit must be continually strengthened by renewed communion with the spirit world. In marriage the flesh is to a certain extent satisfied. In virginity and celibacy the flesh is mortified. And this mortification is sustained just in proportion as the spirit satisfies its supernatural longing for God. Regular Confession and Communion therefore are the first normal conditions of a chaste life outside the marriage state.

In the natural order the normal condition of chastity is work. René Bazin, in his exquisite story, "Redemption," draws a fine picture of a young milliner who made her occupation a fascinating and consoling joy. But she was an exception, and ended, moreover, by taking the nun's veil. The occupation of women in workshops does not of its nature tend to keep them good. It is drab and uninteresting. Marriage, therefore, is their hope. And if they adopt the single life, either volun-

tarily or in willing submission to necessity, their hope lies almost solely in the regular use of the other Sacraments.

The single life is more easily chosen by the woman of the middle and upper-middle classes. She can enter the learned professions. An expert authority has said, though the statement has been questioned, that from twenty to thirty per cent of women are by temperament adapted to single life in the world. Whatever the exact percentage may be, it would seem to pertain to the normal state of a healthy society that a certain number should be free from the cares of a family, so as to be able to take a more active and independent part in the social and spiritual regeneration of the community.

It is well, in these days, to insist upon this phase of the Catholic ideal. Single blessedness, thus sanctified by the Church, has a social as well as an individual value. The restraint practiced in the single life re-acts generally on the whole social organism. It re-acts particularly on the marriage state, strengthening it and keeping it pure. We are all members one of another. The power of self-conquest which virginity implies is bound to tell in greater or less degree on every member of society.

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Let no one then despair of being unable to find a vocation. Those who marry do well, for without them neither the Church nor the world could continue. Those who marry not do better, for they sacrifice themselves for the whole spiritual kingdom, bearing fruit to the extent of many souls. If they do not choose this state spontaneously, even so they can sanctify it by using it and directing it to the higher claims of the spirit.

CHAPTER IV

CHOICE OF A MATE

THAT was a naïve answer given by the little Irish girl. Asked by the priest what was the way of preparing for the Sacrament of matrimony, she replied: "A little courting, your reverence." The truth thereby unconsciously spoken needs to be well spread abroad in these days. Courting time is a preparation for a great Sacrament.

In speaking of this, even as of all other phases of Christian life, there is need of much common sense. On the one hand the young people who have arrived at this interesting stage may be expected to take it seriously, but on the other hand they must not be expected to deport themselves as if they were preparing for a funeral. Company keeping is one of the happiest times of life, and if it is not attended with joy and brightness there is something wrong somewhere. At the outset, then, let it be known to all parents that there is nothing sinful in their grown-up children looking for partners. Let it be known to all nuns that

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there is nothing wrong in big children of Mary speaking to the young men of the congregation. Let it be known to all young men and all young maidens that the affair of courtship is not something to be ashamed of. Of its nature it involves a certain amount of modesty and shyness. Still, from its earliest signs and movements it is something which ought to be perfectly aboveboard, known to father and mother, acknowledged in the presence of the family. It is a preparation for a great Sacrament, and its verve and joy and delight can suffer no loss through being regulated by the claims of religion.

Now, although falling in love is something which ought to be controlled by reason, it is not entirely an affair of the reason. It is primarily an affair of the heart. If only such marriages took place as were the result of clear reasoning and mere reasoning from beginning to end, this would become a very dull and uninteresting world, and we might indeed have grave fears for the survival of our race.

But in addition to reason, God has given man and woman affection and love. The affection and the love have reason to guide them, but their action depends largely on their object. The light of intellect in the man cannot make a woman's face

look more beautiful. The light of intellect in a woman cannot make a man's form look more handsome. A case of real love between a man and woman is beyond adequate explanation. A man may love a woman for her good looks, for her domestic virtues, for her intellectual endowments; but the kind of love she likes best is that when he is obliged to say: "I do not know why I like you, I only know that I do."

So the problem to be solved by all young Catholics is this: How are the claims of this mysterious and inexplicable love and affection to be reconciled with the claims of stern reason and sublime religion? Let it not be supposed that these rival claims are incompatible with each other. They all come from one and the same Author, and so it is only a question of adjustment. In order to make this adjustment, then, both parents and children should know what are the rules of the Church and what are the rules of right reason. With this double guiding light the young people may then frequent such places and cultivate such company as shall be likely to afford a fitting environment for the passion of love when it makes its appearance.

The rules of the Church come first. Marriage is a great Sacrament, and the Church, having the

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guardianship of all the Sacraments, claims the right to say what is the best preparation for marriage and what are the conditions under which it may be contracted. She has a right to say what conditions affect the validity, and what conditions affect the lawfulness, of the contract. The contract is the Sacrament, and, therefore, only the Church can say what impediments render the contract unlawful, and what impediments render the contract null and void. They will all be found to be eminently practical and possessed of a special aptitude to foster that pure and passionate love which the young people value so highly.

The first qualification that a Catholic would look for in a partner for life would be that the partner should also be a Catholic. Mere acquaintances feel that they have a common and lasting bond between them if they are both Catholics. This feeling must be indefinitely intensified between two who are to live together in the intimate life of holy matrimony. Indeed, the advantages of such a condition, together with the evil consequences following upon the neglect of it, need a separate treatment. It will be sufficient here to say that the Church regards the matter as of the most vital importance. The impediment is classified, with two others, under the title of "Prohibi-

tion of the Church." These two also will recommend themselves as obviously conducive to the safe-guarding of the Sacrament. The one is the proclamation of the banns, by which each party is protected against possible fraud or mistake. The other is that which requires the consent of parents. It is part of the solemn duty of parents to watch over the children in an affair of great consequence. And indeed parents, especially the mother, do watch their children most anxiously. The law of nature compels it, the law of the Church sanctions it. With reason, then, does the Church oblige children to consult their parents in the matter. Of course, cases may and do arise in which the consent of the parents is unjustly held back. Some parents out of mere selfish love dislike to lose their children, and act all regardless of the divine ordinance that for the sake of matrimony a man shall leave his father and mother. In case of dispute, however, the children will not go against the wishes of their parents without first consulting their confessor.

Again, since the Church regards marriage as a great Sacrament, she encourages her children to celebrate it with great pomp and festive joy. It happens as a rule only once in a lifetime and, therefore, is most fittingly accompanied with ban-

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quet and merry-making. All these things, however, would manifestly be out of place during times set about for the more solemn religious exercises. The Church ordains, therefore, that marriages shall be discouraged during the seasons of Advent and Lent; in Advent until the feast of the Epiphany, in Lent until Low Sunday inclusive. A marriage may, however, be permitted during these times, but it must be celebrated without any of that external display which would otherwise be so fitting on such an occasion.

A third condition for a lawful marriage is that neither party shall be engaged to any one else. There are three points of view from which a previous engagement must be regarded. It has a personal aspect, a legal aspect, and an ecclesiastical aspect.

No man of honor will enter into a new engagement until he has been formally released from any previous engagement in which he may have become involved. It would, perhaps, be needless to say that he ought not to make serious overtures to another partner until he has been released by the first; for, oftener than otherwise, it is the appearance of a new face which is the cause of dissatisfaction with the old one. A man in such a predicament owes it both to himself, to his pre-

vious partner, and to his prospective partner to arrange an honorable settlement as soon as possible. The claims of society demand that neither girl should be kept in a false position. The previous partner, too, may have legal rights to compensation for breach of promise.

Then again there is the ecclesiastical aspect of the matter. The law has recently been changed, and henceforth only those engagements hold good in ecclesiastical law which have been made in writing, signed by both parties and signed by the parish priest or ordinary, or at least two witnesses. Of course, couples may marry lawfully without such an agreement in writing, but without such an agreement the engagement will not be binding in conscience or produce any canonical effect. It would produce a legal effect and a social effect; it would hold good in the eyes of the law of the country and in the eyes of all respectable society. Nay, more, although there would be no obligation to marry, although the espousals were invalid, through want of proper formality, still those invalid espousals would render a person liable to all due restitution or damages just as if they were valid. Thus the Church protects the weaker party in two ways. First, she gives the warning and protects young people against imprudent engagements, — engage-

ments entered into without deliberation, and under circumstances when innocence and ignorance hinder the due consideration of the dignity of the Sacrament. Secondly, she obliges the guilty party to make fitting restitution for all the material loss which the innocent party may have suffered in consequence.

Another impediment, similar to that of previous betrothal, is the impedimental vows. Obviously, a vow to do one thing is a hindrance to the making of a vow to do something contrary. So rarely, however, does this impediment arise that it may be left for individual treatment. If there has been a vow of any kind, the matter should be mentioned to the confessor.

Further, there are a number of impediments which not only render a marriage unlawful and sinful, but also null and void. Let us clearly understand the difference between what is unlawful and what is invalid. If I burn down my neighbor's haystack, it is validly burnt down, for there is no haystack left; but it is unlawfully burnt down. My action is valid, but not lawful. If I shoot at my neighbor in the dark and miss him, my action is both unlawful and invalid. I have intended to take my neighbor's life, but have failed to do so.

Likewise there may be certain attempts to get married which, on account of certain impediments, produce no effect. Such ceremonies are both unlawful and invalid. It is the duty of the priest to inquire whether there be any such impediments before he allows the celebration to take place. Most of them are so rare as not to need public treatment.

When the banns are published the faithful are told that if they know of any impediment, either of consanguinity, affinity, or spiritual relationship, they are bound to declare the same as soon as possible. The impediment of spiritual relationship is that which arises out of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The chances of this relationship are reduced to a minimum by the custom of having a man as sponsor for the boys and a woman as sponsor for the girls.

The two great diriment impediments, therefore, which need to be carefully watched by young people are the impediments of consanguinity and affinity. Consanguinity is the connection of blood relationship; affinity is the connection of relationship by marriage. The Church excludes marriages between persons who may be related to each other within certain degrees of relationship. She thus forbids marriage between first, second, or third

cousins; and also between a man and his deceased wife's sister. These are the more common cases in which difficulty arises and which need to be carefully guarded against. In some of them, of course, which are not involved in the primary law of nature the Church may grant a dispensation. Nevertheless, she regards them as evil, and only grants dispensations in order to prevent greater evils. The disastrous results of intermarriage are well known. It leads to deterioration of the race, to insanity, to physical deformity, and to a general weakening of the social bond. The Church, therefore, in setting her face against such marriages, proves herself to be the friend and guardian of the temporal, as well as of the spiritual, well-being of her people.

Now, although the Church is very strict in limiting the freedom of her children whenever it is for their good, yet at the same time she leaves much to their own individual judgment. Those who look forward to a happy marriage, therefore, must avail themselves of that freedom which the Church allows, and use also their own sound judgment and common sense. In this sphere one cannot lay down hard and fast rules. What is good in England may be bad in America; what is permissible in one degree of society may be inadvis-

able in another. The custom of the country or of the particular sphere of Catholic society is a point which must always be considered. Nevertheless, a few general suggestions may be offered.

Character or virtue will be the first quality to be sought for in the choice of a mate. The predominant and essential virtues expected from the man are honesty and sobriety. These are especially manly virtues. In the natural order it is the sense of honor which will keep the husband faithful to his wife, and insure for her that respect, care, and protection to which she has a right. Sobriety, too, is absolutely necessary for the making of a happy home. The love may be there and the fidelity may be there, but they will be in constant peril if they are accompanied by drunkenness. And if drunkenness be a failing during the days of courtship, a reform after marriage cannot be expected. The pity of it is that girls are only too eager to find excuses for a lover addicted to this failing. "Oh, but he is as quiet as a lamb when he is sober!" The only reliable advice to give to a girl with an intemperate sweetheart is to break off the engagement at once. The predominant virtue expected from the woman is chastity. This will be measured by the care which she takes in avoiding occasions of sin. Here it is not a ques-

tion of having sinned grievously, but of a constant observance of all those habits of modesty, reticence, sobriety of language and gesture, and, above all, utmost decorum in all necessary intercourse with members of the opposite sex. They are habits which can be observed and felt much more effectually than they can be described. In fact, every Catholic girl knows them, and no one is so observant of and sensitive to them as the honorable young man who comes to pay court to her.

Next, compatibility of temper must be examined. It is easy to discern. Quarrels during time of courtship may be reasonably excused from time to time. The proverb that true love never runs smoothly implies that, in the common estimation of mankind, lovers' quarrels are a part of the business of love-making among those who are not angels. But there are some lovers whose courtship seems to be one perpetual quarrel, one everlasting carping, jealous insinuation, and complaint. Obviously such a life would only be accentuated in the marriage state, and the sooner the engagement is broken off the better for both parties.

The question of health, too, ought not to be overlooked. In earlier days the Church spoke more explicitly on the matter, though now she leaves it to the parties themselves to decide. The

cases in which the difficulty most frequently arises are those of insanity and consumption. As a counsel of perfection it is well in such circumstances to abstain from matrimony. But where this abstention is fraught with moral danger, then the advice of a medical expert should be sought. Parents have a duty toward their prospective offspring as well as to themselves. The science of heredity is anything but an exact science. As for consumption, the treatment of it has now been so vastly improved that very many consumptive people may now marry without serious danger either to each other or to their offspring. Those, however, who contemplate such a marriage ought always to consult a specialist previously.

The questions of age, social standing, and wealth, may not be overlooked. Certainly many happy marriages have taken place between persons far removed from each other in age, fortune, and position. These, however, are exceptions rather than the rule. A young person will not naturally seek a much older one with a view to matrimony. But the cases of those hunting after a larger fortune and higher position are only too frequent. And it is these who come to grief in married life.

Lastly, there is the question of passion and personal beauty. Let it be said at once that passion

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is not a bad thing in itself. It is only bad when it overrides reason. Let it be said, too, that beauty of form and looks is not a thing in itself to be despised. The Church, in her office of virgins, applies to them the words of the psalmist: "With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign." So long as it is kept in due subordination to the gifts of character and virtue, then it may be prized for what it is worth. Only when opposed to the fear of God is beauty said to be vain, and form fallacious.

The great principle to be kept before one's mind, therefore, in the choice of a mate, is that the Sacrament of marriage is not a crushing or a cramping of human nature, but a perfecting and realizing of it. If limits have been placed by the law of God, by the law of the Church, by the law of reason, then those limitations of choice are the conditions of a wider and nobler freedom. If it seems hard to have one's choice limited to a partner of the same religion, remember that that law duly observed will be a safeguard against a multitude of more irksome limitations in the future. If it seems unfair to have one's choice limited to those who are not of blood relationship, remember that that law duly observed will probably mean salvation from some of the most horrible calami-

ties which can befall the marriage state. If love seems to have limits set to it by reason, remember that those reasonable limits are the barriers which prevent love from degenerating into mere passion, and insure for it a strong and lasting endurance.

CHAPTER V

MIXED MARRIAGES

THE Church, in her dispensation of the Sacraments, always acts as a good and kind mother. She has regard to the weakness, as well as to the strength of her children. Her divine message is all beautiful. The ideal which she sets before her children is a perfect ideal. She ever emphasizes this ideal even though she knows that in many cases it will not be realized. She wishes her children to conform to the ideal as nearly as possible. Consequently she condescends to them, and where in her wisdom she finds that the weak ones cannot realize what she wishes, she allows, within certain limits, that which is less good. She knows that the Sacraments were made for men, not men for the Sacraments. She prefers, then, to administer the Sacraments with certain accidental imperfections rather than allow her children to go without the grace which the Sacraments convey. For this reason she tolerates what are known as mixed marriages. Strictly speaking, mixed marriages are

those which take place between *baptized* persons, of whom one is a Catholic and the other a non-Catholic. Thus, the ceremony performed between a Catholic and a Jew would not be a mixed marriage in the sense of the word as we use it. A mixed marriage, generally speaking, is that which takes place between a Catholic and a Protestant. Now, although the Church tolerates such marriages under certain conditions, yet she ever deprecates them. They fall below her ideal. In order, then, to understand clearly why the Church looks so unfavorably on such marriages we must keep before our minds the nature of her ideal. The bond between man and wife is as the bond between Christ and His Church.

The chief characteristic of the bond between Christ and His Church is its intense intimacy and absolute perfection. Christ, indeed, by another comparison, likens it to the substantial union between Himself and His eternal Father. Nowhere can distinctness and unity be so complete as in the bosom of the blessed Trinity. The distinctness is infinite, and thus enables the Father and the Son each to receive an infinite love. Their unity is that of one infinite substance, which enables them to communicate to each other an infinite love, a love which issues in the person of the Holy Spirit.

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This is a type of the union between Christ and His Church. The Church, of course, is a finite creature and incapable of giving an infinite love to Christ. Nor again is the union between Christ and the Church a substantial union. The Church and Christ do not make up together one substance. But since that union has been likened to the substantial and infinite union of the Father and the Son, we conclude that it must be of a nature far more intimate and far more perfect than we can ever hope to comprehend. And since the union of man and wife has been likened to the union of Christ and the Church we conclude that that also must be of a nature far more intimate and far more perfect than we can ever hope to comprehend. The Sacrament of marriage is a great mystery, a shadow of the mystic union of Christ and His Church, a shadow of the eternal and substantial union of the Father and the Son in the blessed Trinity.

The first and foremost reason why the Church deprecates mixed marriages is because they spoil God's ideal. Christ came on earth to speak the mind of the eternal Father. The Church exists to speak the mind of Christ. Any suggestion of difference of thought between the Father and the Son, or between Christ and His Church, carries

with it the evident mark of its own absurdity. From this absurdity, however, we may gather something of the imperfection of a marriage union in which the parties profess different faiths. The Catholic faith is the most precious treasure, the most illustrious adornment, which a man can possess. It is a possession, moreover, which is unique of its kind. It cannot combine or make terms with any other faith. If one article be changed only in the slightest degree the whole faith is rendered vain. A marriage union, therefore, in which one party makes profession of Catholicism and the other of Protestantism cannot be but an ungraceful thing in the eyes of God.

Indeed, there are few people who do not recognize the irregularity. It is only the immediately interested couple, who, for the time being, cannot see that it is a matter of the highest importance. They are madly in love, and where it is a question of so much love the faith must accommodate itself to circumstances. Yet, if they could only see the connection between faith and love, they would have to recognize that diversity of faith in the marriage union must eventually tell against love in the marriage union. Faith is the gift by which we believe in God and in His word. Without belief in God we cannot love Him. Without the full ac-

ceptance of His word we cannot follow His commands and ordinances. We cannot live in sympathy with that wonderful system of morality by which He adjusts and fosters the love between man and man.

Thus it is that the Protestant married to a Catholic cannot avail himself of the teaching and the Sacraments of the Catholic Church which might be so effectual in fostering love between man and wife. Real love is that only which has faith for its foundation. But in the mixed marriage the faith is all on one side. It does not flourish with that fecundity which would be present were the parties united in one and the same belief. Further, this absence of faith-informed love on the part of the non-Catholic partner must in a measure react on the Catholic partner. Grace is very powerful, but it needs a nature upon which to act. And if the faith-informed love of the Catholic partner finds no response in the non-Catholic partner, if it receives an inferior love in return, or if it discovers itself misunderstood and unappreciated, then, if it does not dwindle away, it at least fails in its possible measure of fruitfulness.

The Church has her eyes wide open to the weakness of human nature when she tolerates a mixed marriage. A mixed marriage is a real Sac-

rament, and all the graces of the Sacrament are capable of being conveyed through it, though these graces may often fail in their effects through the want of disposition in the non-Catholic party. The Catholic party may do his or her best, as the case may be, but as human nature is so weak, there is naturally an ever-present danger of the Catholic losing the faith. Over and above the certainty of spoiling God's ideal there is the disadvantage of risking the loss of faith altogether.

Therefore it is that the Church, when she allows a mixed marriage, insists on the condition that the Catholic partner shall not be hindered in the practice of the faith. The non-Catholic must give an explicit promise to this effect. He may not make any contrary conditions, either before or after the marriage. Any attempt to compel or persuade the Catholic to go to a Protestant Church, to stay away from Mass, or to abstain from Confession, is a dishonorable violation of the condition and promise.

The Church by a long experience knows that such attempts are only too common. Sometimes they are done openly and menacingly. Oftener, perhaps, they are done quietly and in a friendly way. Numberless are the occasions when the danger creeps in. The Catholic is perhaps too late

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for Mass on Sunday. Then the obvious suggestion of the non-Catholic is: "Oh, well, come to our Church for a change." Or it may be merely a social gathering under Protestant auspices, a bazaar, a tea party, an excursion — surely one cannot be so narrow as to object to these! There would be less danger in them for a Catholic who was out and out a Catholic, a Catholic joined to a Catholic in marriage, and generally subject to Catholic influences. But for the Catholic who is the partner of a Protestant, and who is without all those helps which an entirely Catholic family provides, these social functions are so many pitfalls. They seem harmless enough in themselves, but they lead from one thing to another, from the social to the religious. Indeed, wherever one partner is Protestant, the opportunities of perversion are as persistent in their frequency as they are subtle in kind and degree. In this, as in all other dangers, prevention is better than cure. Foster a strong dislike for mixed marriages. Avoid company where you are likely to meet a partner of another religious persuasion. Reject the first overtures made by one who is not of your faith. Then, if circumstances have been too many or too strong for you, make up your mind at once that only by strict observance of the conditions laid

down by the Church can your faith and your hope and your love be saved.

The fostering of mutual love, however, even the most perfect and most spiritual love, is not the chief end of marriage. The chief end of marriage is the begetting, and educating, of children for the kingdom of heaven. The Church, therefore, in her legislation for mixed marriages has a special care for the children that may be born of them. The child pertains to the ideal of the great Sacrament. In the mystery of the blessed Trinity it is the united love of the Father and the Son, in the person of the Holy Ghost. In the mystery of Christ and His Church the one is bridegroom, the other the bride, and they are united for the purpose of bringing forth children for the kingdom of heaven.

So, if the Sacrament of marriage must be true to its mystic types, it must be so ordained as to be an apt principle for the bringing forth and for the educating of children in the Catholic faith. The faith is so important for the child, that its influence should be felt at the first dawn of reason, and all through those impressionable days of childhood and youth. No demonstration is needed to show that only when both father and mother are united in the faith can those early impressions be

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efficiently imparted. A different faith, in either one or the other, must inevitably tell on the character of the child. In the interest then of the offspring the Church looks askance on the mixed marriage.

When, however, she permits it as something less good, and for the sake of avoiding some greater evil, then she places a special condition in favor of the children. The non-Catholic party must explicitly promise that all the children must be brought up in the Catholic religion. There must be no compromise. Oftentimes the non-Catholic party proposes to meet the Church half way, and suggests that the girls shall follow the mother while the boys follow the father. And the idea prevails in some quarters that the Church is willing to allow this. Let it be clearly made known that the Church knows nothing of such half measures. According to her law every child of a mixed marriage must be brought up a Catholic. The soul of a boy is just as valuable as the soul of a girl, and the soul of a girl is just as valuable as the soul of a boy, for both have been bought with an infinite price. In their education, therefore, there must be no compromise. All, without exception, must be brought up in the Catholic faith.

Further, the Church has also a cure for the non-Catholic party. He has already received the Sac-

rament of baptism and now he receives the Sacrament of matrimony. He is a subject of the Church, albeit a rebellious subject. His rebellious state may be due to no fault of his own, and he may not recognize his rebellious state. The Church, however, recognizes it and consequently makes a special effort to win him back to her obedience. She places a third condition to a mixed marriage—the Catholic party must strive to bring about the conversion of the non-Catholic.

The condition tends to the perfection of the ideal, tends to the preservation of the faith of the Catholic partner, tends to the preservation of the faith of the children, tends to the eternal salvation of the non-Catholic partner. The reasonableness of the condition is evident. Its application, however, seems at first sight to be fraught with considerable difficulty. How is one to know whether there is any hope of a professing Protestant becoming a Catholic? Does not the Spirit breathe where He will? Must the non-Catholic have already entered upon a course of instruction? The practice of the Church does not require the manifestation of such clear signs as suggested in the last question. But the two conditions concerning the faith of the wife and the children, if generously fulfilled, would seem to go a long way

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toward fulfilling the third condition. If the non-Catholic party willingly signs the declaration that his wife may have the free exercise of her religion, and that the children may be brought up Catholics, then that may be deemed sufficient grounds for hoping that he, too, may some day become a Catholic. Evidently he is not fighting against the Church. Evidently he has some good will toward it. Presumably he is not resisting grace. Under such conditions one may reasonably hope that the grace of God will some day prove effectual.

We must strive, then, to keep three things well to the front of the Catholic consciousness. First, the union of marriage is a great Sacrament, having its ideal likened to the union between the Father and the Son, and to the union between Christ and His Church. Secondly, mixed marriages are discountenanced by the Church because they spoil God's ideal, because they endanger the faith of the Catholic party, and because they endanger the faith of the children. Thirdly, they are sometimes tolerated in order to avoid greater evils, and then only on the three conditions that the Catholic shall have free exercise of religion, that all children shall be educated as Catholics, and that there shall be a reasonable hope of the Protestant becoming a Catholic.

CHAPTER VI

BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

THERE is a very old Hindu legend in which the making of the first woman is described in this wise. When the creator Twashtri had made man he gathered together a million contradictory elements, and out of them he made a woman whom he presented to the man. After eight days the man became dissatisfied.

“My lord,” he said, “the creature you gave me poisons my existence. She babbles unceasingly, she takes all my time, she grumbles at nothing, and is always ill.”

So Twashtri took the woman away. But after another eight days the man became again uneasy.

“My lord,” he said, “my life is very solitary since I returned this creature.”

So Twashtri gave him the woman back again. This time, however, only three days had gone by when the man came once more to the god.

“My lord,” he said, “I do not know how it is,

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but somehow the woman gives me more annoyance than pleasure. I beg of you to take her away."

But Twashtri would not. "Go and do your best," he said.

"But I cannot live with her," cried the man.

"Neither can you live without her," cried the god.

"Woe is me!" mourned the man, "I can neither live with nor without her."

Since that story was written thousands upon thousands have felt the conflicting experience which the story expresses. The underlying truth is that when man and woman are joined together in matrimony neither of them is perfect. It is their mutual life and constant adjustment of mind and heart, under the influence of matrimonial grace, which is to make them perfect. Marriage is one of the means of their salvation. Let us refer to St. Paul to see how the grace acts. He touches two sensitive nerves when he says: "Wives, be obedient to your husbands as you should be in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter toward them."

Doubtless the Apostle was writing to correct certain abuses prevalent among the people to whom he wrote. He was not necessarily giving a full and comprehensive description of the mar-

riage ideal. Forgetting this, many people have misunderstood the Apostle's words, especially that portion of them which speaks of the obedience of wives. How many women there are now who, reading the epistle in the light of present day abuses, "cannot stand that man Paul!" Let our consideration then be confined to these two virtues of conjugal relationship, love and obedience, for it is the failure to appreciate their true nature which issues in multitudes of other evils, affecting not only individual families, but communities, nations, nay, the whole human race.

"Husbands, love your wives." The Apostle is evidently referring to a neglect on the part of the husbands. He is not talking as if love were to be a one-sided affair. The very nature of love requires that it should be reciprocal, and should exist at least between two persons. The ideal love requires three persons. In God it is the love of the blessed Trinity. In the religious it is the love of God and of one's neighbor. In the family it is the love of husband, wife, and child. The love between two is the inchoate and root love which issues in the perfect love between three. The love of the Father and the Son issues in the personal Spirit of love. A religious must love God before she can love her neighbor. Husband and wife

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must love each other before they can love their children perfectly. It often happens that a wife who is without a husband's love can take refuge in the love of her children. But she can love her children more when she knows that she possesses also the love of their father.

The nature of man and woman, however, is such that the love of the man toward the woman needs a more careful watching, a more careful cultivation. A woman's love is as a torrent which is always flowing. It has been used even by God as one of the most forceful analogies by which to make men realize His love for mankind. It is of its nature so generous and so constant as to overshadow that other endowment of woman, her intelligence.

The difference, however, between the two faculties, the faculty of loving and the faculty of thinking, is not so great as has been frequently supposed. In our endeavor to emphasize the quality of a woman's love we may not undervalue her intelligence. We must ever remember that woman is essentially a rational being just as man is. She herself is beginning to realize this all the world over. One of the most remarkable phenomena of the age is the movement for the emancipation of women. While admitting and

asserting then the claims of woman's intelligence, we cannot overlook the fact that it is in affairs of the heart that she is the stronger.

On the other hand it is, ordinarily speaking, the lot of the man to be the breadwinner of the family. He it is who must use his brains in the learned professions, in commerce, in the arts, and in the crafts.

There are exceptions. Oftentimes the wife is the brains of the family. Half of the teaching profession consists of women. But the lady doctor, the lady dentist, and the lady professor, usually find it more convenient to retire from their professions whenever they enter the state of matrimony. And simply because man is the working brains of the family his faculty of loving needs a special culture. He has so many outlets for his attention that if he does not take the greatest care, his love which should be devoted to his wife and family is absorbed in his business or other intellectual pursuit.

The lines upon which the cultivation of a husband's love should take place will be decided according to the character and dispositions of the wife. Generally, however, it must have the three qualities of being affectionate, practical, and exclusive. It must be first of all affectionate. The

double affection of a woman for her children and her husband springs from the same affectionate nature. If it is to flourish it must be fed. The need must be satisfied or it will shrivel away. There is a tendency among men to regard the time of courtship as the time of poetry, and the time of marriage as the time of prose. And there is an axiom among women that they are to expect about half as much affection after marriage as before. It is very sad that it should be so, although it may be excusable. There are far more cares in the married state than in the single, which of their very nature tend to take the poetry out of life. It has been divinely foretold that such shall have trouble in the flesh. But it need not be so bad as it is. Nay, the very cares which tend to lessen the affection ought to be the occasion of its increase. To cultivate such affection requires an active will and a keen intelligence. The man ought to be a man. That is, he ought not to allow himself to be moved merely by his passions and feelings. He ought to use his intelligence to find out what little acts of sympathy, kindness, interest, and attention affect his wife's feelings toward himself. Then he ought to put forth a strong will in the frequent repetition of such acts. It is extremely beautiful when an old Darby and Joan can

look back on a married life of say forty years, and tell you with a knowing smile that they have not yet finished courting. They have learnt the secret of cultivating affection, of seizing upon adversity only as an occasion for deeper sympathy, of studying each other's likes and dislikes, of saying the word which gives pleasure, of avoiding the word which gives pain.

Secondly, a husband's love must be practical. Here again it is a question of external attractions against the attraction of the wife at home. Some men there are so absorbed in their business or profession as to regard their wife and home as a mere accident in life. Their business is not, as it were, a means of keeping one's self, wife, and family in comfort, but rather the wife and the family are the means of carrying on the business. Or, again, the counter attraction may be only low pleasures, the pleasure of company, the pleasure of the club, the pleasure of the public-house. All are violations of the practical love due from husband to wife. Frequently the wife can just tolerate them, provided she gets the affection. But that is only because by nature she has such a strong affection.

Nevertheless, a prolonged neglect of the practical side of a husband's love must wear out a wife's

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affection, and then there is an end of all love, the family life is broken and the strength of society is sapped at its foundations. The husband's practical love of his wife, therefore, his care for her dress, her housekeeping, her health, her pleasures, has consequences reaching much further than would appear at first sight. His affection must be translated into action, else he fails in one of the greatest duties of his manhood.

Thirdly, a husband's love must be exclusive. The Christian dispensation in forbidding polygamy shows how much more it is in conformity with the laws of human nature than the other religions which allow plurality of wives. If there is one instinct which is paramount in woman it is that the love given to her by her husband must be exclusive. And what the law of nature demands the law of revelation confirms and sanctions. The Christian wife cannot for a moment tolerate the idea which prevails in the Mormon or the Mohammedan social systems.

Even more peremptory is the law of nature against the crime of adultery. Nowhere, however, are these laws of nature more carefully protected than in the Catholic Church. She has had twenty centuries' experience of human nature. She knows quite well that those laws cannot be

observed by merely forbidding the grosser sins of adultery or polygamy. One does not fall into those sins suddenly, while leading an otherwise pure and blameless life. The way is prepared by a series of seemingly less harmful sins, the unchaste thought, the unchaste look, the unchaste word. Therefore it is, that in the matter of purity the Church brands as mortal sin even the lesser faults when deliberately committed.

The true Christian husband, then, will not be content with merely guarding against sin. He will strive all he can in the opposite direction. He will avoid even innocent attentions to others which may possibly give displeasure to his wife. He will make it a special study and effort that his wife shall realize that she is the only one who has any attraction for him. If this habit of thought and action be sedulously cultivated it will bear fruit on both sides. The mutual love between husband and wife will be so strong and constant as to leave no room for jealousy, for such love is strong as death, and actually is the death of that jealousy which would be hard as hell.

What has been said of a husband's love applies equally to a wife's love. It must be affectionate, practical, and exclusive. Although these qualities are ordinarily found more pronounced and more

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natural in the wife than in the husband, yet even the wife cannot afford to leave them to natural impulse. She also must cultivate them, must watch them, must seek out opportunities of giving them free and healthy exercise. There is only a slight difference in their order. Bending to the nature of the man, instead of making her love first affectionate, then practical, then exclusive, she will simply reverse the order, so that her love shall be first exclusive, then practical, and then affectionate.

“Wives, be obedient to your husbands in the Lord.” Like all other social movements, the movement for the emancipation of women is fraught with the danger of rushing into the opposite error of that which is to be remedied. Impotent of discernment, the agitator will purge away both the dross and the gold together. Especially in this question of the obedience of wives to husbands will he, or rather she, persist in confusing the true obedience with false, in condemning an obedience which no Christian wife is supposed to render.

Let us see then what is conjugal obedience. No one will deny that in some sense the husband is the head of the family. Man was made first, and made lord of the earth. In his overlordship

he was lonely and had need of a helpmeet for him. To this end was a woman taken from his flesh and bone and given to him to be his wife. She was not to be reckoned, among the rest of creation, as part of the man's goods and chattels. Nor yet was she to be reckoned above man. Nor yet again was she to be reckoned as fulfilling the same office as man. She was to be his complement, helping him in those things for which by nature he was unsuited. He was to be the strong element, she the gentle. He was to be her protector; she was to find her joy in the sense of the security of his protection. Obviously, then, she was meant to yield, at least to some extent, to his overlordship. The only question is as to what extent.

We all know the distinction between servile and filial obedience. The one is the obedience of slaves, informed by the motive of fear; the other is the obedience of sons, informed by the motive of love. So, likewise, there is a distinction between servile obedience and conjugal obedience. The obedience of wives is as much raised above that of sons as that of sons is above that of slaves. Doubtless there have been many husbands who have demanded of their wives the obedience of a slave. And doubtless such husbands are largely responsible for much of the present mis-

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understanding of the nature and limits of wifely obedience. Broadly speaking we may say that the obedience of the wife is due to the husband only within certain limits. It is not absolute. It is due to him in all those matters where it is evident that he must rule. It is not due to him in those matters where it is evident that the wife must rule.

All matters of business, everything which seriously affects the income of the family, the choice of trades or professions for the children, — these evidently belong to the judgment of the husband. The wife may be, and ought to be, frequently consulted. But having expressed her opinion she ought to abide by the decision of the head of the family. On the other hand the interior domestic arrangements pertain to the judgment of the wife. The management of servants and babies, for instance, are points upon which the husband should have nothing to say, except perhaps when he is asked, or when he divines that his suggestion will meet with his wife's approval. And a wife would be acting well within her rights were she to resent any interference in these matters.

Hard and fast rules, however, cannot be laid down. Much depends upon the temperament of individuals and the force of circumstances. If a

man has failed in business, say three times, and eventually has to depend on his wife's dowry for a livelihood, or upon another business built up by his wife, then he cannot expect to have the same authority as one possessing the full complement of manhood.

Again, no obedience is due to him when he is obviously demanding something contrary to divine law. To require a wife to give up any of her religious duties as a Catholic, to ask her to do something which is against any of the Ten Commandments, — these are occasions when she not only may, but must disobey. In all cases of doubt, however, the presumption is in favor of the husband.

Above all things, however, the obedience must have its foundation in mutual love. Unless there is present that determination to love each other through thick and thin, through success and through adversity, through life and through death, it will be useless to try to decide by argument who has the right to command and who the duty to obey. The love in marriage is a great mystery, and he who would reduce it to mechanical laws must possess a higher knowledge than that ever yet possessed by mere man.

CHAPTER VII

CONJUGAL RESTRAINT

ALL who look forward to marriage do so as to a state of ideal happiness. Yet how many fail to realize their ideal! It makes you jump, as Chesterton would say, when you think of what you expected, and compare it with what you have got. So we come round again to the same old theme: if you want to enjoy the Catholic ideal of a perfect marriage you must follow the Catholic rules. He who wishes for the end wishes also the means to the end.

Now one of the chief means to happiness proposed by the Church is conjugal restraint. It would be very strange if in all the other animal tendencies she counselled moderation, and in this allowed unlimited indulgence. Yes, there can be debauchery in the pleasures of married life just as in the pleasures of eating and drinking. Such excess is a violation of the law of nature, and inevitably brings on nature's punishment. In this, as in all other functions of man, virtue, happiness,

and well-being are to be found in moderation, and moderation is secured by rational restraint.

The question before us is not so much as to what is sin or no sin, but rather as to what helps to a higher happiness. The Church allows a wide freedom in the enjoyment of conjugal pleasures. She never for a moment forgets that one of the ends for which marriage was instituted was that it should be a remedy for concupiscence. In order therefore that there shall be no danger of indulgence outside lawful matrimony, the widest possible exercise is permitted within matrimony. The Church goes, hand in hand with nature, to the furthestmost of nature's limits before she says that such or such an act is sin. She counsels the married pair, however, not to avail themselves of the whole range of nature's freedom. She declares that rational restraint is the way to the highest and fullest happiness in married life.

The root reason of this counsel is to be found in the fact that by restraint the sexual appetite is brought under control of the will. The will is guided by reason, and reason in its turn is illumined by divine wisdom. Thus, restrained and controlled, the sexual appetite can be directed to the three great ends for which it was made, and thus can it be prevented from abuse, for which it was

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not made. The order and higher satisfaction thus secured constitute the essence of happiness.

Let us see now how this higher satisfaction is reached. There are three ends for which marriage was instituted, and consequently three reasons which make the marriage act lawful and holy. The first and chief is the begetting of children. The second is the calming of concupiscence, and consequent avoiding of incontinence. The third is the fostering of conjugal love and affection. But all these minister to the perfection both of the individual and of the race. The married pair see in their offspring the continuance of their own life. Their joy is to know that a child is born to them, to see the child grow up and become settled in life, to hear that their own son is making his mark in the world, or that their own daughter is married well and happily.

The second and third reasons minister to the first. Unless there were a remedy for concupiscence, incontinence would follow, and with it all the evils of jealousy, quarrels, illegitimacy, separation, or divorce. Further, the fostering of conjugal love tends both to the increase of offspring, and to its good bringing up when born.

Sensual pleasure for its own sake is not amongst the recognized reasons for the exercise of the

marriage act. It passes away with its own satisfaction, and if indulged merely for that purpose has neither use nor dignity. As a matter of fact it was made to minister to higher ends. It is a mere adjunct to the marriage act, intended to make it attractive for the benefit of the race. If, therefore, it is perverted and made an end in itself, and if its higher ends are excluded, then it defeats the aim of matrimony, it kills the love between husband and wife, it shirks the burden of children.

In order that sensual pleasure may be the servant and not the master of man it must be restrained. It must not be crushed or destroyed. That was the error of Manicheism and Buddhism. But it must be moderated so that it may remain as long as possible a help towards conjugal love, towards the normal satisfaction of the sexual appetite, and towards the procreation of a large and healthy family of children. To let it have its full fling is to lessen its keenness, to destroy its power, and to render it disgusting.

There can be no general law for everybody. What is excess for one pair may be moderation for another. What is moderation for one partner may be excess for the other. Each case must be judged according to its own circumstances.

In deciding this, the existence and the welfare

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of the offspring is the first consideration. Incontinence tells against the interests of the offspring. Each partner then has the duty of seeing that, as far as possible, the other shall not be exposed to this danger. For the sake of home and family, therefore, each one is bound to render the debt as often as reasonably asked.

For such a sacred purpose either partner should be willing to undergo serious inconvenience. Indeed, marriage is supposed to be fraught with serious inconveniences. These are love's opportunities, and love is given to overcome them. The cares of child-bearing are no excuse for the wife refusing consent, nor yet is the expense of the child's education an excuse for the husband refusing consent. Not even a difficult childbirth is a sufficient reason for refusing. The only justification for refusing is something so serious as to involve danger of death, or long painful illness. Complete debauchery will come within this category. Such excessive indulgence may so weaken a man's will as to render him liable to incontinence. In the interests of conjugal fidelity the wife would in such a case be justified in refusing.

The intention of this chapter, however, is to indicate counsel rather than precept, to point the way of the higher happiness rather than the low-

est degree of strict justice. St. Paul is our inspired authority. In laying down his doctrine he is careful to say that it is a mere recommendation and not a binding obligation. "Defraud not one another, except perhaps, by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer; and return together again, lest Satan tempt you for your incontinency."

In the first place he defends the conjugal rights of each partner. The husband is not to take upon himself any extraordinary restraint without the consent of the wife, nor the wife without consent of the husband. The aim of restraint is to acquire a wider and deeper spirit life. But to do so at the expense of another's rights is an act of injustice which of its very nature militates against the deeper life desired. God instituted marriage as a remedy for concupiscence. But to deny the right is to put the other partner in danger of incontinence. Such an act of injustice can only entail spiritual loss to all concerned, and become the source of discontent and unhappiness in the family circle.

Lawful restraint requires three conditions. First, it must be by mutual consent; secondly, it must be only for a limited time; and thirdly, it must be for the sake of a higher spirit life. "All

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things have their season: a time to embrace and a time to be far from embraces." And the time most fitted for this abstention is the time of solemn fast or feast. "Blow the trumpet in Sion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: let the bridegroom go forth from his bed, and the bride out of her bride-chamber." The two observances are mutually helpful: the abstention promotes religion, and religion promotes restraint.

The Church makes no law about the times of this restraint. She recommends, however, that it be practiced at the times of the ecclesiastical fasts and festivals. At the end of the marriage service the priest is directed so to admonish the bridal pair. Owing to the delicacy of the public conscience this admonition is usually omitted. It remains, however, to be read privately by all those who will avail themselves of the wisdom of Mother Church.

The counsels of St. Paul and the Church are supported by the counsels of nature. Nature will allow a wide liberty, but she will rebel if she is over-taxed. It is astonishing how the race continues, considering the extent to which its reproductive powers are abused. But nature is both kind and strict. She gives ample warning as the limits of moderation are transgressed. If the

excess be persistent and grave, she visits the offenders with grave chastisement.

The married pair, then, have the advantage of two guides, nature and religion. Nature will give the first warning against excess. The moderate exercise of the sexual life ought not to interfere with the working-life of either husband or wife. The strength of the weaker partner, then, will be the measure by which restraint is judged.

If the advice of the Church, too, be followed, it will be a strong help to the married couple to regulate their life within the bounds of physical fitness. To be explicit, the Church mentions the eves of all great festivals, and the seasons of Advent and Lent. But, once again, the rule is not one of obligation, but only one of counsel and can thus be changed to suit each one's individual needs.

This restraint is not accomplished by unaided nature. It is the result of a special grace of God which is conferred through the matrimonial Sacrament. The woman is the minister of grace to the man, and the man to the woman. Grace is given to accomplish all the ends of matrimony. But this restraint is needed for these ends. Therefore it will be supported by grace. Thus the Catholic ideal is again seen to be the power making for family happiness. It tends to keep the parents

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in good health and consequently tends to produce a healthy offspring. In preventing excess it prevents the married pair from becoming mere instruments of pleasure for each other, and consequently promotes a reverence and love which debauchery would destroy.

Now, although this abstention during ecclesiastical seasons is not of obligation, yet there are occasions when it is of obligation; and it will then be difficult to observe unless the non-obligatory restraint has been practiced.

Common decency demands that abstinence should be observed during the whole period of menstruation. The same must be said of the time immediately following childbirth. There is an idea prevalent, especially amongst the poorer classes, that it is bad luck to return to the married life until the woman has been churched. There is no rule of the Church to this effect. But it is a good custom provided it is regarded merely as a custom, and not adorned with the sanction of magic, of good luck, or bad luck.

Then comes the question of times of illness. For one partner there is danger of grave illness, whilst for the other there is danger of incontinency. Rather than expose a partner to the danger of sin the other partner is bound to suffer grave

inconvenience, but is not bound to go so far as to incur dangerous illness. It is difficult sometimes to draw the line, and wherever the line is drawn it means dissatisfaction for one or other of the parties concerned. How much better it would be, then, if both had practiced restraint when it was not of obligation! It would have produced a habit of mind and heart, by which the stronger partner would show a tender regard for the weaker. It would have become an effective expression of love, powerful to create a return love and thus to weld anew the marriage bond.

There may also arise the necessity of temporary separation on account of business. A commercial traveler may be away from home for months at a time. A sailor may be ordered abroad for a year or perhaps two. Whenever possible a man should take his wife with him on his travels. But since this, for many, is not practicable, the mind must be especially strengthened by the practice of restraint when it is not obligatory.

The plight of the very poor calls for special consideration. There are thousands upon thousands who have not got a living wage, yea, indeed, thousands upon thousands who have no wages at all. A poor dock-laborer of Liverpool, writing to me on various topics of the social question,

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thus very delicately tells his story: "I will now touch briefly," he says, "on the birthrate. Many good earnest-minded men have often said of us workers, that it was a crime for a man earning a small wage to marry and bring children into the world, whose only heritage was one of poverty and want. Too well do we know with what anxiety the arrival of each little new-comer is looked forward to, as it means more to feed and clothe, while the earning power of the bread-winner is gradually growing less. But as the Church tells us that we are obeying the law of God, we may well ask 'Is it ever to be thus? Must we, in order to do what we were created for, commit a serious crime against our own offspring?' And in this dilemma we inquire: 'Which is the greater criminal, the working-man for obeying God's law, or he who is responsible for his condition in life and who prevents him from rearing his family in decency and comfort?' Although I look on little children as precious heirlooms sent from God, and with full knowledge that they beget happiness, could I be blamed should I advise my sons not to marry till late in life, or else refrain from marriage altogether; and so further restrict the birthrate, the decline of which is causing so much agitation throughout the country?"

The writer is a good Catholic and so does not go so far as to suggest the artificial restriction within marriage. This evil, though, is closely bound up with the economic evil of which he speaks.

Let it be said at once, then, that poverty is no bar to the Sacrament of marriage. The poor are entitled to receive all the graces and all the joys which pertain to the marriage state, and the possession of children. Poverty in its extremity, destitution, that is, is a deplorable evil; but it is a mere trifle compared with the sins of incontinency which would surely follow if the poor were forbidden to marry. It is a mere trifle compared with those detestable sins against nature, the artificial restrictions of the birthrate.

Of course there is no reason why young people should not abstain from marriage until they have a living wage, or, having married, abstain from the marriage act, provided this can be done without danger of incontinency. This course, indeed, may be profitably recommended and the Sacraments of the Church will be the best help in carrying it out. But Satan will be busy amongst those who try it. If it fails, marriage is the remedy in spite of all poverty, marriage and all the normal blessings of marriage, the procreation of children,

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the avoidance of incontinency, and the promotion of mutual love and affection. And if eventually the marriage is to be made ideal and despoiled of the stigma of destitution, it can only be by fidelity to the complete ideal of the Church, for it pertains to the complete ideal of the Church that a man should receive as much wages for his labor as will keep himself, his wife, and his family in reasonable and frugal comfort.

The sexual question, therefore, though largely a physical and economic one, is at bottom a religious one. The restraint needful for a happy marriage wants religious illumination and strength. The marriage bond has its likeness in the bond between Christ and the Church, namely, the bond of intense, strong love. The marriage bond is thus something quite distinct from lust. Lust seeks its own animal gratification, regardless of any other end but its own indulgence. Love, however, seeks the higher well-being. The love of the married pair then will be tender above all things. It will be selfless to a degree so that the weaker party has every consideration. Whatever sensual pleasure may be incidental to this love, all will be controlled and directed to the higher well-being of husband, wife, and children.

CHAPTER VIII

BEFORE AND AFTER CHILDBIRTH

THE Church teaches that children receive their bodies from their parents, but not their souls. Each soul is specially created by God and infused into the body at the moment of creation. God does His share at the will of the parents. He has so decreed it as part of His providence. Parents therefore share the dignity of parenthood with God. Hence the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews can say: "Moreover we have had fathers of our flesh for instructors, and we revered them: shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits and live?"

There is a difference of opinion amongst Catholic theologians as to the precise time at which the soul is infused into the newly formed body. Some say that it is at the very moment of conception, whilst others, including St. Thomas, say not until some time after, when the body has been more perfectly formed. The first opinion is the more common. For all practical purposes in

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regard to marriage it may be more profitably followed; for whether the soul comes at the moment of conception or later, the Church regards the new and independent life as existing from conception. If the new being has not got an intellectual soul, it is nevertheless ordained by God to receive one. All harm, therefore, which may be inflicted on the new being is harm inflicted on a human being, either directly or by anticipation. Likewise, all good done to the new life is good done to a human life, either directly or by anticipation.

The first duty of parents towards the unborn child is to recognize the sacredness of its life. One of the commonest features of race suicide which prevails to-day, is the destruction of the unborn child. Artificial means are adopted in order to prevent conception which are not always successful. Then recourse is had to the crime of abortion. And the sad thing is that the opinion is spreading that such a destruction of child life is not a crime. Parents speak of it as if it were an ordinary way of being rid of an unpleasant inconvenience. Happily the idea has not become prevalent in Catholic families. Nevertheless, Catholics need to be on their guard against the materialistic doctrine and its consequences. Let

the truth be said plainly: All attempts to kill the unborn child are attempts to commit murder.

Again, the child unborn has the right to every care that it shall not be hurt by accident. What constitutes dangerous occupations or amusements must be decided in individual cases by the family doctor or an experienced mother. What is insisted on here is that there is a moral obligation on the part of the parents to do nothing which will directly injure the third person concerned. If anything, the child has an especial right to protection, on account of its inability to protect itself.

Perhaps more important still is the influence which parents exert on the soul of the unborn child. True it has not received Baptism and is incapable for the time being of receiving the covenanted grace consequent on Baptism. But there can be no doubt that the heart and mind of the parents do exercise an influence, for good or for evil, on the unborn child. Perhaps it may be only in the natural order. But even so this natural foundation is a preparation for the supernatural grace of Baptism. The supernatural grace will be all the more fruitful if it falls upon well prepared natural ground.

The science of education tends to throw back the time at which the formation of the child mind

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begins. Formerly the best teachers were reserved for the highest classes in our schools. Then it was seen that the lower classes were of equal importance. And so on the important day was pushed back; and now there are educationists who say that a child's training begins forty years before it is born. Doubtless there is some exaggeration in these sayings, yet there is enough truth in them to show that the parents, and chiefly the mother, do exercise an enormous influence on the children before they are born.

The use of alcohol by the parents is proved to predispose the child to alcohol. At the time of the exercise of the marriage act, both parents should be quite free from any effects of drink. With regard to the mother, it were better that she should be a total abstainer, and particularly during the whole period of child-bearing. Only by medical advice is it wise to take any alcoholic stimulant whatever. The same advice holds good, too, for the period following on the birth of the child.

The dispositions of mind and heart also reproduce themselves. If the mother is cross, or depressed, or unhappy, during the time of child-bearing, there is a likelihood of the child being tiresome. And conversely, if the mother is happy

and contented, the child will probably be good and easy to nurse.

But whence comes this happy disposition in the mother? Almost entirely from the kindness and love of the husband. If he is careless about his home, or shows any marked distaste for the domestic inconveniences consequent upon the arrival of the new-born, his disposition will act upon his wife, and re-act upon his child. Hence the duty lies with the husband of taking the burden of marriage in the truly Catholic spirit. He has been warned of the burden, and he has received a sufficient measure of grace to enable him to bear it. At least for the sake of his wife and child he will correspond with that grace, and make himself a model husband and father.

The duty may be summed up in one word, sympathy. The opposite vice may likewise be named in one word, niggardliness. The coming of a child means extra expense, and the sooner the man settles his mind to this, the better for himself and his whole household. It is not his duty merely; it is his privilege. He, together with his wife, shares the honors of parenthood with God. He can do nothing better to make himself worthy of that honor, than by helping his helpmate to the full extent of his capacity.

It is not necessary for the future mother to know all about the possible dangers which may arise. Indeed, it is better that her mind should be occupied rather with the healthy and spiritual aspect of the situation. But dangers may happen which involve moral principles. Now in order that the Catholic mother may act according to those principles it is well that she should be guided by a Catholic doctor. There are some doctors with materialistic views, who advise operations which are forbidden by the Church,¹ and not only advise them in extreme cases but also in unnecessary cases. Owing to the strictness of the Church in forbidding certain operations, the practice of midwifery in Italy has made enormous progress. The doctors, knowing that they were forbidden to do these things, thought out ways of avoiding them; and thus, thanks to the decrees of the Church, hundreds of lives, both of mothers and of babes, have been saved from destruction.

On the other hand, some operations are both lawful and praiseworthy. The Cæsarean operation, that by which the child, which cannot be born in the ordinary way, is taken from the abdo-

¹ A full treatment of this and similar questions is found in the following books, both published by Mr. Joseph F. Wagner: "Pastoral Medicine," by A. E. Sanford, M. D., and "The Right to Life of the Unborn Child," by Prof. Treub, M. D.

men of the mother, is one such. The question as to when it may or ought to be performed is a complicated one and hardly concerns the general public. When, however, it is raised by a doctor, Catholic or non-Catholic, a consultation with one's spiritual director is advisable.

The doctrine that the child is a separate and distinct human being, from the moment of conception, implies a grave responsibility in the cases of miscarriage. If the embryo which comes away is alive, yea, if it only live for a few moments, it has a right to Baptism. Many people feel a repugnance to this idea. Still the truth must not be shirked. If the soul is there, it must have every chance of salvation, for it is of priceless value. There is no need for a particular examination as to whether the child is alive or not. The Sacrament is administered conditionally. On the one hand, the child may be dead. If this is certain, no Baptism may take place. On the other hand, it may be alive, yet capable of living only for a few moments. The time is too precious for detailed examination. Let the ceremony be performed as quickly as possible. The doctor, or the nurse, will take the whole being, the embryo with its covering, and put it in a basin of clean lukewarm water. The covering is then broken so that

the liquid within flows out whilst clean water flows in. The embryo should then be moved about in the water whilst the person performing the ceremony says these words: "If thou canst be baptized, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

When there is danger of death of the child during the process of being born it must be baptized conditionally. Either the nurse or the physician, but not the priest, must pour water (sterilized) on such part of the child as is apparent, though it be only the hand, saying at the same time the words with the condition above stated.

Where there is danger of death to the mother during childbirth, she should receive the last Sacraments. The conditions of danger are well known to the members of the medical profession, and so the doctor must be the guide. This danger is present in all cases where operations are needed. The principle wants emphasizing, however, that the Sacraments are for the sake of men, and not men for the Sacraments. It is much better to run the risk of administering the Sacraments when unnecessary, than to run the risk of missing them when necessary.

It may be well at this point to call attention to the special blessing which the Church is ready to

give in the case of dangerous childbirth. She implores the Creator of all things, under the beautiful figure of supreme doctor and nurse. "Accept," she says, "the sacrifice of a broken heart of Thy servant so that, by the obstetric hand of Thy mercy, her offspring may come safely to light, and be preserved for holy regeneration."

Here again the Church has foremost in her mind the higher welfare of the child. She has the tenderest care for the safety of body, but this safety of body must be directed to the safety of the spirit. When, therefore, a child has been brought to a happy and successful birth, the duty of its parents is to see that it is baptized as soon as possible. If the child is strong and healthy, it should be taken to church for this purpose within eight days. If the child is weak, and likely to take harm from the weather, then the priest is to be sent for. As long as it remains unbaptized it is to some extent under the power of Satan, and all unnecessary delay on the part of the parents is a grave injustice to the child.

The churching of women is an act of thanksgiving to God for having been brought through a difficult crisis. It is also a blessing given by the Church. But it is not a Sacrament.

There is a widespread impression that bad luck

comes to the woman who, going out for the first time after childbirth, does not take the opportunity of being churched. So ingrained is this idea that many women look upon churching as of far more importance than Baptism. Now the ceremony of churching is of no obligation whatever, whilst that of Baptism is. There can be no comparison between the two. It is a praiseworthy custom to go to church and render thanks to God as soon as possible, but nothing more than a custom. Provided the woman does not stay away out of contempt for the ceremony, but merely for considerations of health and convenience, she commits no sin. If, on the other hand, she goes as soon as she can, she obtains a blessing for herself and her family.

The law of nature demands that mothers should suckle their own children. The Church, in interpreting this law, does not make it binding under pain of mortal sin. If the mother be suffering from bad health, or if she have to attend to business or other grave duty, then the Church does not exact this duty under any pain whatever. But wherever a nurse is called in, the mother must see that she is of good health and morals.

Whilst allowing this liberty of substitute, the Church points to the law of nature as the more

perfect ideal, and as tending more to the welfare of the child and the happiness of the family. Nay, she ennobles the law of nature by setting before the world that type of mother of whose Child it was said: "Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the breasts that gave thee suck." Any suggestion of substitution in this case is simply unthinkable. And if it were not beneath the dignity of such a mother to accept the full burden of her office, so it should not be beneath the dignity of the dames of a worldly society. It should rather be their glory to set the example to their poorer sisters. The poor nurse, who is taken away from her own child, has all the dignity and feelings of motherhood equally with the richest woman in the land.

Not on this point only, but on every other that pertains to the care of the child, born or unborn, the mother's mind is raised and her heart enkindled by the Catholic ideal. This ideal is realized in Mary, the Mother of God. The Protestant consciousness has never become reconciled to the title, and consequently has never learnt the lesson which it teaches to the whole Catholic motherhood. When the eternal God took flesh in the womb of the Virgin, and deigned to be the object of a mother's tender nursing, care, and

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affection, then was motherhood raised to its highest grade of splendor and magnificence, then was the law of nature made perfect by the law of grace. A real perfect Mother of flesh and blood was given to the mothers of the world to show them the glory of their state. She was instrumental to the forming of the Incarnate Christ; they are to be instrumental to the forming of the Mystic Christ.

“ But, every day that goes
Before the gazer, new Madonnas rise.
What matter, if the cheek show not the rose,
Nor look divine is there, nor queenly grace?
The mother's glory lights the homely face.

Oh, sainted love: oh, precious sacrifice:
Oh, heaven lighted eyes.
Blest dream of youth; best memory of age.”

CHAPTER IX

THE BLESSINGS OF MANY CHILDREN

WHEN man and woman were first joined together in holy matrimony, a divine command was given unto them to increase and multiply and to replenish the earth. Adam alone was lonely, and lonely in more senses than one. Eve was given him to be his companion, not merely, however, for the sake of companionship, but also for the benefit of the race of which he was to be the father. She was to be the co-principle with him for the procreation of the great human family. She was to be his help in domestic life and also his help in the life of the race. The whole earth was to be replenished by their offspring.

This was one of the first and most peremptory laws of nature. And being such a fundamental law it has persevered until now, and must persevere until this world is exhausted, until there is no more use for the law, until we are safe in heaven, where we shall be as the angels, neither giving nor taking in marriage.

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This natural law, moreover, has in the meantime been fortified by additional sanctions. The natural law is a reflection of the divine Mind. The new sanctions, therefore, do not alter, but emphasize the original law. Throughout the Jewish dispensation, therefore, we find that fruitfulness in child-bearing was ever regarded as a sign of divine predilection, as a fulfilment of God's promises of prosperity. And as fruitfulness was looked upon as a special sign of God's favor, so was barrenness looked upon as a sign of God's displeasure or forgetfulness.

Further, when the contract of marriage was raised by Christ to the dignity of a Sacrament, this same end of marriage remained as the chief, the procreation of children; but at the same time it was raised to a higher plane, the procreation of children both for this world and for the next. The mother who had done her duty in this matter had fulfilled her highest destiny. By bringing many children into the world, by bringing them into the Church through Baptism, by bringing them to their final salvation through her good example and zeal for Christian education, she had saved her own soul. "She shall be saved, however, through child-bearing, if she shall persevere in faith and love and holiness and sobriety."

Seeing then that this fruitfulness is according to God's will, it must be rewarded with God's blessing. And, indeed, it is first a blessing to the family, secondly a blessing to the State, and eventually a blessing to heaven itself.

Many children are a blessing to the family. First, they provide the opportunity for the exercise of one of the strongest instincts of nature, family affection, the love of parents toward children, of children toward parents, of children toward each other. No matter how many children a mother may have, her love for any one of them is not thereby diminished, but rather increased. If she had to part with any one of them, she could not make the choice. They are each dear to her, because they are her own, because they are the children of her husband, and because they are brothers and sisters to each other. The family love is so woven and interwoven, that, the greater the number of the threads, the more difficult it is to distinguish any one of them. This may be the result of merely natural affection.

When, however, the family love is intertwined with supernatural faith, supernatural hope, and supernatural love, then is the family bond made indefinitely stronger, and the family love more keen and more satisfying. The mother of the Macha-

bees did not love her children less, but indescribably more, when she had to lead them to be sacrificed for the sake of God's cause. And although her natural sorrow must have been one of the most poignant ever suffered by mother on account of children, yet her supernatural joy must have surpassed it in intensity and have produced in her maternal heart a satisfaction far exceeding the natural void caused by her bereavement.

Secondly, a large family is a means of developing character, both in the parents and in the children. In the case of the father, it is a question as to whether he will face the task of working and saving for the means of bringing up a large family. He certainly needs courage. He certainly needs self-denial and self-restraint. He certainly needs the help of Sacraments and other religious ordinances. But these are the very warp and woof of manly character. He is only a weakling, therefore, wanting in manhood and wanting in the stamina of a Christian, who shirks the duties of fatherhood merely because they involve a heavier burden.

In the case of the mother, it is a question as to whether she will face the illness and the anxieties incident to a large family of children, and possibly, which is the greatest trial of all, displeasure

and neglect on the part of her husband. The burden of motherhood then acts against flimsy attractions of the world of pleasure. It concentrates her attention on the family. It gives her an interest than which nothing is more absorbing and satisfying outside heaven. In a word, it develops her womanhood. And, since she is of the gentler, as contrasted to the sterner, sex, her numerous anxieties will develop in her the quality of gentleness.

Further, if she is so unfortunate as to have a husband who is unkind or neglectful or difficult, then it will bring out her characteristic of tact. There are few husbands who do not need some "managing." And it is the glory of some wives that they know how to "manage" their husbands; how to get what they want without crying or quarreling for it. Surely, therefore, it must be an accomplishment worth cultivating, to be able to rule by tact and by persuasion, rather than by force or harshness.

Now a large family implies many relations to be adjusted, many misunderstandings to be smoothed over, many arrangements for the mutual welfare of all. It is the mother of the family who has to do all this. It is by her instinctive tact and enduring patience that the family is held together. The

more accomplished she is in this office, the brighter does she shine as an example of motherhood. And the greater will be her accomplishment in proportion as she has the greater number of children to care for.

In the case of the children it is a question of generosity or selfishness. Who has not looked with dismay on the spoilt child, the only one of the family? Who has not observed the ugly self-consciousness, pride, and vanity of two children, the miserable two who have had no other companions but each other during the years when the foundation of their character was laid? And who has not seen the beautiful unselfishness and generosity of the children of a family of seven, or, better still, of a family of fourteen? Why, even their faults and their sins are due to excess of generosity, rather than to defect in it. The principle of give and take has been so often demanded of them and so often exercised, that it must have grown into a fixed habit by the time they come to separate and go their way in life apart. The boys have had their boyishness toned down by the gentle influence of the girls, while the girls have had their girlishness toned up by the strong influence of the boys.

Thirdly, a large family is a means of strengthen-

ing both the temporal and the eternal interests of the family. Even from a worldly point of view a father is working against his own interests in setting limits to his family from motives of economical selfishness. His view must be a broad one, however. The law of nature pervades the organization of society, even as it does the organization of the physical universe, and none the less does it there reflect the mind of God. It is, therefore, both the law of nature and the law of God that children should support their parents in sickness and old age. When, however, there is only one child or two, and these have wives and families of their own to support, there is little opportunity of supporting aged parents. But where the burden is divided, among say seven or eight families, then the aged couple have some hope of ending their days in reasonable and frugal comfort.

Again, we must remember that in most countries the provision of free education is such as to leave no room whatever for the excuse of economy. If the father has the pretension to go further, and to leave his two children enough inheritance to save them from the necessity of working for a living, then he is doing an injustice both to his children and to society. Drones are a nuisance in

every line. In all stages of society the work of bringing up a family of children is a burden both to the father and to the mother. It is a burden, however, which is followed by a handsome reward if only it is generously accepted.

The children, too, must profit by their larger number. The world is so wide, trades and professions are so manifold, as to leave practically little difference in the difficulty of finding situations for eight and that of finding situations for two. Nay, if we look around we shall find that it is the only boy rather who fails to make a good beginning, and the only girl rather who fails to secure a husband or a vocation. Owing to the absence of fraternal influence and education, they have not got the grit in them to make them attractive to others. Then again, later in life, the many are a help to each other in time of difficulty. They do not all meet with adversity at the same time. If one is low down in business or low down in health, his brothers and sisters are there to help him, each knowing that he or she may likewise depend on the others whenever the hour of distress shall overtake them.

This mutual support extends also to the sphere of faith and morality. How often has not a father been kept to his religion, and a mother been

saved from temptation, by the thought of the children! It is curious how parents who have given up the practice of religion themselves, have often insisted on their children being taught religion and brought up in a good moral atmosphere, and eventually through the children have been brought back again to God. Holy marriage is a Sacrament and as such is a means of grace. It is an instrument of the Holy Spirit, and no one can tell the multitudinous ways and times and places in which the Holy Spirit uses this instrument.

The family being the foundation of the State, its life must produce an effect on the life of the State. If fruitfulness in child-bearing is a blessing to the family, it is likewise a blessing to the State. A man has reached a high state of natural virtue if he can be so unselfish as to take the interests of the State as a motive for his own right conduct. Human nature being what it is, such a motive can hardly be expected to work as the predominant one. It can, however, act, and act effectively, as a supplementary one. It is a motive, too, which goes a long way in the formation of public opinion which reacts on private opinion.

When the abuses of family life were first propagated, they were propagated ostensibly with a view to promoting the nation's welfare. The

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country was said to be overpopulated; and these abuses were introduced to reduce the population. The nations, however, which have allowed themselves to submit to these abuses have found out to their heavy cost the great mistake which they have made. Statesmen, with no pretensions to high morals or a godly life, have discovered that this abuse is a canker eating away the vitals of the nation.

France stands out pre-eminently as the worst sinner of all. This last year her death rate exceeded her birth rate. Germany is wide awake to the evil, and a movement has been set on foot to counteract the growing practice. Otherwise prepared for emergencies in the case of war, this would be her weakest point. England has to lament her decadence due to practices introduced from France. And in America the sermon preached by President Roosevelt on the burden and duties of the married state, tells of the prevalence of the evil, and emphasizes the fact that the evil is a curse to any nation. It weakens its power of production; it weakens its power of defense; it weakens its power of intelligence and morality; it weakens the very life blood of the limited offspring which actually is born, for such offspring must come from a principle which

is already marked by weakness, softness, and decadence.

The Christian family, however, was not made for the State as for its final destiny. It was made for the glory of God. Fruitfulness in child-bearing tells eventually for the greater glory of God. The mutual happiness of the persons of the blessed Trinity is all sufficient for the intrinsic glory of God. God, however, has chosen to surround Himself with an extrinsic glory. He has created creatures to give Him honor and praise. And the greatest honor and praise of this kind which can be given Him is that of man. It adds nothing to God's internal happiness, but is rather the expression and diffusion of God's love and goodness outside Himself.

God, therefore, having provided this great happiness for His creatures, He wishes as many as possible to avail themselves of it. In this way He obtains His greatest external glory. The greater the number of souls that are added to the number of the elect, so much the richer is the music of nature's hymn of praise. That this is the mind of the Church may be seen from the enormous care which she takes for the happiness of infants. Her priests are bound to undergo the gravest inconveniences, in order that they may apply the bap-

tismal water to any child in urgent need of it. Why is this? It is because Christ has died for and purchased these children. It is because God has chosen for Himself a number of elect souls, a great number which we cannot count, but which we must do our best to make up, presuming or rather knowing that to do so will require all our spiritual efforts.

To hinder the course of nature, therefore, is to interfere with God's plans. It is to pull down His work in the Church militant, and to lessen His glory in the Church triumphant. A diminution of the number in the children of the Church is a diminution of the Church's collective faith, and love, and holiness. It is a diminution, too, which reacts on the parents; for since they have wilfully lessened the number of subjects of faith and love and holiness, they have wilfully lessened their own faith and love and holiness. They have lessened the chances of their own salvation. But letting nature have its way, they contribute to their own eternal welfare, they contribute to the collective eternal welfare of the race, they contribute to the greater glory of God.

Some apology is needed for even venturing to speak of the abuse of matrimony, and the apology which is offered is the only permissible one,

namely, absolute necessity. The evil is widespread and is still growing. If it is to be counteracted, it must be counteracted, both by the private good living of individuals and by the formation of a good public opinion. Non-Catholics now speak openly and without any sense of shame of their small families and of their intention of having only small families. Advertisements of the most pernicious nature are flaunted openly in the newspapers. Books are published, the aim of which is to propagate and to make the evil as easily accessible as possible.

Seeing then the high ideal of matrimony which the Catholic Church sets before the world, she must of necessity look with special horror on an abuse which does away with the primary end for which matrimony was instituted. Therefore it is that her preachers have to speak out when they would fain keep silence. And, therefore, it is that every Catholic should set his face against all approval or toleration of the abuse.

A few practical suggestions then are offered which may serve to indicate the attitude which Catholics ought to assume when questions concerning this matter arise. The first is to keep clearly before one's mind the fact that the law of nature, the law of God, and the law of the Church

all condemn any wilful interference with the due course of nature. A second is to protest vigorously against any opinions approving of such when proposed in conversation. A third is to boycott all newspapers, books, and business houses, which make a trade in providing the means for the pernicious practice. A fourth is to take a holy pride in a large family of well-brought-up Catholic children. Natural motives as well as supernatural motives may be used for this end. Natural as well as supernatural motives have been proposed in this consideration. But natural motives alone will not suffice. A premium provided by the State for every seventh child will not hinder the decrease of population. Christian principles must be made the foundation of society life; that is, the family life must be governed by Catholic faith and Catholic morality. And if natural motives are offered and used, it is only that they may be added to the strictly supernatural ones and that they may be directed to a supernatural end, and thus become themselves supernaturalized.

CHAPTER X

BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

SINCE children have to remain with their parents for such a long time between being born and making a home for themselves the mutual duties should be clearly defined. And the Church has defined them. Speaking generally, the parents owe their children love and education, whilst the children owe their parents love, reverence, and obedience.

Of education I shall speak in a special chapter.

The love which ought to exist between parents and children is founded on the fact of generation. That act is the earthly analogy of the divine act of creation. The relationship between Creator and creature, together with all its beautiful implications of redemption, preservation, providence, and so forth is visualized for us in the invocation of the prayer of Christ: "Our Father who art in heaven." This is the archetype of the relationship which should exist between earthly parents and their children.

Parents are certainly superiors over their children. But this superiority does not, as many of them seem to suppose, give them a right to treat their children harshly and inconsiderately. If the first attribute of the heavenly Father towards His earthly children is that of love, then the first duty of earthly parents to their offspring is that of love. Their children are flesh from their flesh, and, as such, nothing under God should be dearer to them. In so far as the children are made to feel this, so much more will they be able to appreciate the tenderness of the Fatherhood of God.

The habit of mind by which parents love their children constitutes the special virtue of *pietas* or dutifulness. Consequently, offences against it are sins. Parents, then, out of consideration for their own souls as well as the souls of their children will be ever on their guard against anger and loss of temper. This is difficult for mothers with large families. All the more reason why they should recognize the fact, and prepare for it by prayer and the Sacraments.

Again they will avoid the habit of always finding fault. "Go and see what Willie is doing and tell him he must n't." The habit tends only to lessen the authority of, and respect and love due to parents.

On the other hand, they will be careful not to spoil the children by giving them all they ask for. Such indulgence is a sin against the virtue of dutifulness.

Above all things, they will not show favoritism. It would be too much to expect absolute equality in all cases. A mother who has had seven girls and then one boy would naturally give the boy little preferences. But preferences ought to be only such as the other children would willingly approve of. So long as one in the family is made to feel that he or she is not in the same favor as the others, he or she will ever be the cause of disturbance, and the blame will lie chiefly with the parents.

Having first paid regard to their own family virtues, the parents will next attend to the corresponding virtues in the children.

Duties toward parents are, of course, of less importance than duties toward God, but on the other hand they are of more importance than duties toward one's neighbor. It is the title under which rights are held that gives the relative importance to the corresponding duties. God's rights come before a parent's rights, because we owe to Him more than to a parent. Nay, we owe to Him the very fact that we have parents, for God was

under no obligation to create our ancestors in the first instance.

A parent's rights come before a neighbor's rights, because our parents gave us our very life, the dearest of all our possessions. Under this title, then, our parents have a right to our love, reverence, and obedience. Just as God is our Creator and demands our love, so our parents are our progenitors and demand our love. Just as God is infinitely higher than men in dignity and so requires a supreme reverence, so parents are relatively higher than their children in dignity and require a relative reverence. Just as God is supreme ruler of the world and has a right to enact an absolute obedience, so the parents are the rulers of the family, and thus, within the sphere of things pertaining to the family, have a right to exact obedience from the children.

The love due to parents is one of the primary instincts of our nature. The sensible affection of the parent for the offspring, and of the offspring for the parent, is evident through the whole of animal creation. Some animals will suffer death rather than give up or neglect their young. If, therefore, this is so in the lower creation, how much more ought it to be true in man, who is raised so much higher and is endowed with a free

and intelligent will, by which to enjoy a more perfect love and affection. By this reason he is able to reflect on the infinite difference between being nothing and being something. He is able to know, and in some imperfect way to realize, what cares and responsibilities his parents have undertaken in bringing him into the world and tending him, until he should come to an age when he can look after himself.

Reflecting on these things the grave obligation, moreover an honorable and beautiful obligation, is at once apparent of making a willing offering to his parents of a great love. Ecclesiasticus, therefore, preaches both the natural and the divine law when he says: "Honor thy father and forget not the groanings of thy mother: Remember that thou hadst not been born but through them: and make a return to them as they have done for thee." Likewise the holy Tobias when, being about to die, he spoke thus to his son: "When God shall take my soul thou shalt bury my body: and thou shalt honor thy mother all the days of her life: For thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee in her womb. And when she shall have ended the time of her life, bury her by me." Indeed, God Himself sanctioned this commandment with a special promise

of material prosperity, and caused it to be known ever afterward as the commandment of promise. "Honor thy father and thy mother that thou mayst be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."

We may see more clearly now what kind of love that of children to parents must be. It must not be one merely of external deference. It must be that heartfelt love, which is human affection apprehended by the reason, controlled and directed by the will, raised and spiritualized by grace. Thus cultivated it will of necessity bring forth fruits in external life and conduct. There will be no more black looks or harsh words; no more unseemly quarrels and aggravations; no more complaints of parents neglected in sickness and old age. "Of what an evil frame is he that forsaketh his father: and he is cursed of God that angereth his mother."

Nay, more. If once the real motive of filial love be grasped and the consequent heartfelt affection be excited, there will be no need of forced outward deference, which even in times of annoyance and dissatisfaction must be observed. All will flow naturally, or rather supernaturally; for with a person whose heart is right, all his actions, however natural, easy, and pleasant they

are, are spiritualized and clothed with divine charity.

The superiority of parents involves reverence on the part of children. It is not the reverence due from an equal to an equal, nor yet is it that of a slave to a master. But it is that special kind of affectionate regard which is known as filial reverence. It is begotten only by a certain attitude of mind. It cannot exist merely as an external show. It cannot exist from any purely philosophical motive. Unless there is an inward acknowledgment to one's self of the parent's superiority under God, there cannot be true filial reverence. This duty, therefore, must have its foundation laid in the heart and mind. The habit of mind must be cultivated of regarding parents as representative in some way of the superiority of God. The reverential fear of God is the root motive of filial reverence of parents. "He that feareth the Lord honoreth his parents and will serve them as his masters, that brought him into the world." From the inward habit of mind and affection there will flow forth the external reverence of words and deeds.

It may happen, it often does happen, that a parent does things which tend to disturb that inward reverence. Here, however, we are con-

cerned with the duties of children, and particularly with the duty of reverence on occasions when the parent has failed in his or her duty. The child is never justified in offering to a parent irreverence. To attempt to justify such conduct on the grounds that the parent has forfeited the reverence due to him is to have missed the chief meaning of reverence to parents. We do not owe them this reverence simply because they are good and kind and affectionate. Doubtless those qualities do impose an extra claim on us. But the foundation reason of our reverence is the bare fact that they are our parents and that under God they are our superiors.

And no amount of subsequent neglect of duty on their part can undo this fact. Of course, our inward feelings are not always under our control. Still, in such circumstances we can and ought to maintain at least an outward reverence of word and deed. Then this outward behavior will react on the inward soul and will tend to fasten the due inward reverence. The exercise of control over our outward actions will strengthen our inward patience, and the effect of this inward patience will make itself felt in the parent and thus be the means, perhaps, of making him reflect on his duty. "Honor thy father in work and word and all pa-

tience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end."

We come next to the question of obedience. The obedience of children toward parents has its reason in the idea of family government. The family is the foundation of the community and of the State. If, therefore, men are bound to obey the laws of the country in which they live, and if they are bound to observe the by-laws of their community, much more are they bound to attend to the commands of parents in all matters pertaining to the well-being of the household. The very existence of a State is dependent on the due observance of its laws. So also is the very existence of family life dependent on the due respect for parental authority. Anarchy in the family tends to anarchy in the community, and anarchy in the State. Filial obedience, therefore, is an exigency of the law of nature.

It is an exigency also of the divine law. "Children," says St. Paul, "obey your parents in the Lord, for this is just." Nay, the parents have a sanction given them to enforce obedience if need be. They must avoid arbitrary and harsh treatment, yet at the same time they must be firm in maintaining their rights and insisting on parental

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authority. "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord." Therefore it is that St. Paul says again: "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord."

Perhaps, however, the children may ask: "Is there no limit to this parental authority? Surely the time must come when I must think and act for myself!" Yes, there are limits which it is well to know. But first let us be clear as to the extent before we speak about the limits. First, it is manifest that parents have supreme authority in the management of the household. The children have not the right to choose the kind of house, the quality of the food, the hours of the meals. Secondly, the parents have charge of the children's manners and education, and therefore they have the right and duty of demanding obedience in behavior about the house. Thirdly, they have the right and the duty of looking after the spiritual welfare of the children. Consequently, they are entitled to say who are fitting companions, what are permissible amusements, whether it is good to go to this dance or to that theatre. Further, on account of this spiritual oversight they have a right to warn the children when the time draws near

for the Sacraments, or when there is any other religious duty to be performed. Again, it is the right and duty of the parents to see to the proper education of their children in fitting them for the battle of life in temporal matters. Consequently, there is a corresponding duty on the part of the children of corresponding with the means provided, of careful attendance at the school chosen, of availing themselves of all the opportunities for the improvement of mind and body which a thoughtful parent has afforded.

Now we may consider the limits of parental authority. First let us recall the root principle of this authority: the parents, in the exercise of it, are only supposed to be carrying out the work of God. If, therefore, any of their commandments are manifestly contrary to the law of God, then the parents have gone beyond the limits of their jurisdiction. In such cases it is not only lawful but of obligation to lay aside the command of the parent. Such a course of action is not disobedience, but rather obedience to a higher law. But notice that this is only allowable when the thing commanded is *manifestly* against the law of God. If there is any doubt the presumption is always in favor of the parent; for a wayward child might easily persuade itself that it was following out

God's will, while it was in reality only following out its own perverse will. Conscience certainly is supreme, but there is need to guard against a false conscience, and the only practical rule is to obey the parent in case of doubt.

Among the several kinds of cases in which the rights of God, the rights of parents, and the rights of children seem to clash, there are two which are constantly arising, and concerning which the Church has made definite arrangements. The question concerns the choice of a state of life. Is the child bound to obey its parents in choosing whether to get married, or to become a priest or a religious?

We are here dealing with what is called a vocation. Now a vocation is a call from God. It is known by certain signs which are recognized by the Church, and with which spiritual directors are well acquainted. If, therefore, those signs are present, if the vocation is sufficiently manifest, then clearly the child is perfectly justified in obeying the call of God, and in setting aside the command of the parent who interferes with the call of God. And the principle works both ways. If the child is called to any given state of life, then it is wrong for the parent to interfere with that call.

If, on the other hand, the child is not called to a given state, then it is wrong for the parent to urge the child, either directly or indirectly, to enter that state. Whether the case be one of entering upon matrimony, or the priesthood, or religion, God's call goes before the wishes of a parent. To ignore the wishes of parents in such a matter is no dishonor to them. Our Lord indeed rebuked the Pharisees, because under the pretense of honoring religion they taught men to withdraw the honor due to parents. The virtues by which God is honored and by which parents are honored are quite distinct from each other, but they are not at variance. Each virtue is limited by circumstances. Virtue carried beyond this limit is no longer a virtue but a vice. Thus the virtue of dutifulness to parents is limited by the virtue of religion, or the worship of God. It can be no honor, therefore, to a parent to render him obedience when obedience to God demands some contrary action.

Thus, whenever it comes to a choice between the service of man and the service of God, the service of God must prevail. Hence those plain words of Christ: "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not

worthy of me." These words apply more particularly to the priestly and religious states, though there is an equally strong sanction as regards the matrimonial state. Christ Himself said: "Have ye not read that he who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And he said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."

On the other hand, there are circumstances when the claims of the parents would seem to prevail. It is not so in reality, for in these circumstances the call of God is not manifest. It is when the parents are so very poor that they cannot live without the support of their children. God does not wish children to leave their parents in such plight, under the pretense of leading a higher life. The highest life in such circumstances is to stay at home and take care of the parent who may be poor, sick, or aged.

There are four chief signs of a religious vocation, namely: constant desire; fitness for the order as to health, ability, and character; acceptance by the order; the absence of any obligation of supporting parents in need. If, therefore, the candidate for religious life found that, in order to enter religion, he must leave his parent in destitu-

tion, that would be a clear sign that he had no vocation. That one fact would mark the limits of the virtue of religion. God could not possibly be honored by the entrance of one into religion under such circumstances. To act thus would be to turn the virtue of religion into a vice. Hence the duty to parents and the duty to God cannot clash, for the limits of the one are outside the limits of the other. If in any given case they seem to clash, if a child wishes to marry, or to become a nun, or a priest, or a monk, contrary to the wishes of its parents, then the practical thing to do is to consult one's spiritual director. He is trained in the theology of the subject, he knows something of human nature, he knows the disasters that are in store, either for forcing a vocation where there is none, or for destroying a vocation where there is one. He knows also the blessings that are in store for the true vocation faithfully followed.

By virtue of this division of labor it comes about that in addition to the love, reverence, and obedience which children owe to their parents, there is also a love, reverence, and obedience due to spiritual superiors. The priest is God's servant through whose ministry God's graces are conveyed to the soul. He is our spiritual father, and therefore in all matters spiritual is entitled to the

obedience of the spiritual children committed to his care. And by the same title of spiritual fatherhood he has also a claim on their reverence and their love.

Sometimes it is necessary for both parents and pastors to get others to help them in their work of temporal and spiritual education. This help is represented in modern times by a vast system of scholastic and collegiate institutions. The schoolmaster, the schoolmistress, the professor, the master of the apprentice, — all these, too, have in their own measure a claim on the love, reverence, and obedience of the children committed to their care. The teacher stands in place of the parent or pastor. It is his duty to recognize in himself an instrument in the hand of God, for the education and improvement of those committed to his care. On this account, therefore, he is entitled to his share of love, reverence, and obedience. True, the love cannot equal the love of a parent. Still, in proportion as the schoolmaster takes upon himself the responsibility of training a child, he may lawfully expect from the child corresponding duties. The principle involved is the same. The teacher is doing the work of God. The child, therefore, in honoring the teacher thereby acknowledges its submission to God; and in doing so it does honor to

itself, for it makes profession of its right place in the order of the world.

In these days there is a strong tendency among men to exaggerate their rights and to undervalue the rights of their superiors. In the family, and in the State and in religion, there is a strong force of opposition to law. It is well, then, for children to realize early the dignity of dutifulness to parents, spiritual pastors, and temporal masters. From a merely natural point of view such dutifulness can only lead to the good of the children. But from a supernatural point of view the thought is noble in the highest degree. We see that in serving our parents and those in authority for the sake of God, we are serving our own best interests; for we are thereby doing our best to place ourselves in that adjustment of the universe which God has ordained as the most perfect.

The saints have ever been eminent in this virtue. Let us take the Blessed Thomas More as a glorious example. Dutifulness toward his parents was one of the most beautiful traits of his life. From his earliest years he showed the tenderest affection for them. Then, when in later life he came to occupy the high post of Lord Chancellor, the fondness and reverence for his parents increased rather than diminished. And the story is told of

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him how, when his father held a position in one of the lower courts, he used to be seen every morning to go and kneel and ask for the old man's blessing.

The law is clear, then, and so it remains for children to fulfill the commandment and to look forward confidently to the reward which will surely come to them in this life and in the next. For God has promised and He is faithful.

CHAPTER XI

SEXUAL INSTRUCTION FOR THE YOUNG

WHEN the question is asked point blank whether children should be taught at least the chief facts of the sexual life, the answer is hard to give. Nearly everybody's instinct shrinks from saying, "Yes." All right-minded parents and teachers feel a reticence in speaking to children on a matter which from its very nature is so private. Yet, on the other hand, nearly everybody's reason declares that children should have such instruction. The great majority of young girls who go wrong do so simply out of ignorance of the tendencies, dangers, and responsibilities of the sexual life. Moral depravity in boys, too, arises chiefly from the fact that they acquire their first information from older boys already depraved. What must parents do in the face of this dilemma? A universal healthy instinct counsels silence, whilst a universal healthy reason counsels speech. Evidently there must be a compromise. And the compromise is this:

there must be speech, but it must be reticent and discreet.

The mind and the senses, the brain and the nerves, are so related to each other that they act and react on each other. So intimate and organic is this relationship that conversation or reading about sexual matters tends to excite the sexual functions. Even though the conversation and the reading may be justified and done with a right intention, it is, nevertheless, fraught with certain dangers. It emphasizes images in the imagination which may become temptations to sin, when the brain is tired or the mind off its guard.

There can therefore be only one reason for enlightening children with sexual knowledge. There can be only one reason for adults discussing sexual topics amongst themselves. There can be only one reason for the writing of this and similar chapters. And the reason is necessity.

In 1905 a conference on the subject was held at Mannheim. An almost unanimous vote declared that the chief laws of sex should be taught to boys in the higher classes of secondary schools. But the widest diversity of opinion was expressed as to the manner in which the instruction should be given; and also as to the extent of the matter; nor yet was there any unanimity as to who should give

the instruction. In Germany experiments have actually been made. But the result has not been satisfactory to the Catholic conscience. Complaints have been raised both as to the information given and the way of giving it. Indeed, very little reflection is wanted to show that, in a matter so personal and private, class instruction is not the desirable thing.

The first principle that may be laid down with safety is that the duty of giving the first instruction in these matters belongs to the parents of the children. Even in the more general parts of education the school is but a supplement to the family. The school-teacher is only supposed to do what the parents cannot efficiently do themselves. But the parent can teach the laws of sex, and ought to be able to do so even more efficiently than the school-teacher. Moreover, the teacher has a right to presuppose such knowledge if in the course of his lessons questions involving sexual laws should incidentally arise.

It has been frequently said that the mother should teach the girls and the father the boys. This rule becomes more appropriate as the children grow older. Girls between the ages of thirteen and seventeen would more naturally turn to their mother, whilst boys of the same age would

more naturally turn to their father. Parents may take this as a healthy instinct and use their judgment accordingly to direct it.

But questions begin to arise in the child mind long before the age of thirteen. As the mother is occupied almost entirely with the children during their earlier years, it is her duty rather than the father's to watch for the signs of awakening intelligence. Knowledge should never be thrust into the child's mind before it is asked for. The state of innocence or ignorance, whichever we like to call it, is better kept untouched as long as possible. If a boy or girl can be kept in a state of innocence, without fear of being smirched by other and more precocious children, say up to the age of thirteen or fourteen, he will be all the better for it both in health of mind and health of body. To put sexual images into a child's mind before due time is to start a tendency towards precocity and moral depravity. The arrival of a new baby is best explained by saying that it is a present from God, and has come in God's good way.

Together with this protection from the unripe fruit of knowledge there should be a corresponding observance of sex hygiene. Irritation due to uncleanness, or to tight and hot clothing, may easily cause undue sexual development and so

become the source of moral difficulty in the future. If any signs of abnormal sexual development appear a doctor should be consulted. Under no circumstances whatever should children be allowed the taste of alcohol. It leads both to drunkenness and impurity.

There comes at length a time when explicit knowledge is in order and must be given. The dawn of a more intelligent interest begins to glimmer. It comes so innocently, so naïvely, that it is just as likely to express itself in the presence of the mother as in the presence of other and older children. That is the mother's opportunity. Then, and not until then, may she give the information. If, as is frequently done, she silences the question by saying that it is one that ought not to be asked, or if she ignores it by talking of something else, then she has missed the opportunity given to her by God through nature. The child's interest has not been crushed, but has even been accentuated and probably directed into a dangerous channel. He will ask the question again, and perhaps when he does get an answer it will be adorned with the attractions of vice. The impression will come to him that somehow the facts of sex are very wicked, but at the same time very alluring.

No! When the right moment has arrived, when the mother judges that if she does not speak some one else will, then she must say the word solemnly and plainly. The fact of sex is something holy and mysterious. If the child wants to know anything about it, it must ask mother and not other people. Children grow in the mother's body and when the time comes they are born.

If the matter be thus solemnly but openly treated there will be no need to go too much into details. The child will make its own inferences, which will be substantially correct. At any rate, they will be enough for the time being. As the child grows older it will want to know more. Here again no exact rule can be laid down. The parents will be guided by their judgment, which will partake rather of the nature of an instinct. As more details are required so will the mother speak to the girls, and the father to the boys. To the parents and not to the schoolmaster, nor still less to boys and girls, belongs the duty of explaining what is meant by being born.

This knowledge is sought for, and possessed, long before the knowledge of how children are begotten. The latter is one of the most difficult things to teach. Parents are inclined to be too reticent about it, with the result that children in-

variably get their first knowledge from undesirable sources. Let reason, then, decide that the parents shall say what is essential, and at the same time let instinct decide that they shall not say more than is essential.

There is no need, whatever, for a full and particular description of the sexual act. Much less is there need of diagrams and pictures of the human body.

The best way is to begin with the lower forms of life. The description of the fertilization of a plant is most admirable. The plant excites no harmful images in the imagination. The poultry yard, too, may be taken as a convenient object lesson. If plants and poultry are understood, then the parent may go further and say that in the higher animals and in human beings the young are produced in a similar way.

The manner of giving this information is more important than the matter. There must, on the one hand, be no tendency to laugh and joke about it, whilst there must, on the other, be no attempt to suppress it as if it were something wicked. The inquiring mind at this stage is alert and receptive. Moreover, it works in harmony with a natural instinct. Thus of its own nature it readily makes the right inferences and draws the necessary

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conclusions. The aim of the parent is to keep these conclusions as ideal as possible, and to prevent them from becoming topics of conversation and reading. The more they act on the senses so much the more likely are they to induce an indulgence of the senses, and thus lead to acts of impurity.

After the age of thirteen or fourteen the boys will claim more particularly the attention of their father, and the girls that of their mother. Now is the time for explicit teaching on certain well-defined matters.

If the boy has been encouraged to look to his father rather than to his own playfellows for information of this kind, he will sooner or later ask in anxiety about the relief of nature in the night. He may be told that so long as this does not arise from any tampering with himself, it is perfectly natural and nothing to be distressed about. The father may also take the occasion to warn him against the sin of self-abuse. This sin is so prevalent amongst boys that the father need hardly be afraid of giving the warning too soon. Let it be said solemnly and plainly that the boy has certain powers given to him by God, for the purpose of begetting children in lawful marriage, and that if those powers are abused in

boyhood they will be damaged for their function in manhood.

Strong motives will be required by the boy to keep him straight. At this age natural motives are very powerful, but they are more powerful if spiritualized and raised to a supernatural plane. Tell the boy first, then, that this is a sin against God. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and sins against the body, therefore, have a special malice in them and bring after them a special punishment. The law of nature is broken and nature will exact a heavy toll. But what is the law of nature except a reflex of the divine mind? And what is the retribution of nature except a fulfilment of the divine Will? Tell the boy, then, that self-abuse impairs the brain and shatters the nerves, that it dulls the intelligence and weakens the will, and that these are the effects ordained by God to follow on the violation of His law.

As the boys get older they may be warned against venereal disease. The terrible natural effects may be pointed out, but always these natural punishments should be associated with the divine law, and shown to be but a portion of the punishment due to such sins.

A proposal has been made, and in European

countries partly put into practice, to enlighten young minds concerning the many extreme forms of sexual perversion. This instruction I hold to be decidedly pernicious. If the boy is warned against the more common sins he will at once recognize the less common and more heinous ones, if the temptation should arise. Whereas if the idea is put into the boy's head unnecessarily, temptation is put in his way. Nay, I would go further and say that books dealing with the extreme forms of sexual perversion should not be read even by adults, unless their profession obliges them to deal with such cases. Obviously the doctor, the lawyer, and the priest should know all about these things. But the ordinary layman can only read them to his own disadvantage. And if this is true of scientific works, how much more true must it be of certain novels and pictures? The policy of reading and seeing all things is sure to work disaster on those who adopt it without sufficient reason. Where there is reason in this matter there is also grace.

Together with reverence for the divine law there should be instilled into boys a profound reverence and respect for womankind. This will be directed in the first instance towards their own mother and sisters. The habit of mind and heart

thus formed in early youth will be of the utmost service to them when in later years they have to associate with and move amongst women not of the family.

The mother will give corresponding instruction to the girls. Directions concerning the first signs of womanhood must be explicit. Our Lady's Virginity may well be taken as an occasion to explain the nature of virginity and its importance to young girls. There is a bodily virginity and a spiritual virginity. Bodily virginity is usually taken to be the sign of spiritual virginity. It is certainly a most important protection of the same, and as such must be guarded with the utmost care. Bodily virginity may be lost either through sin or through ignorance, or through accident, or through necessary surgical operation. Such a misfortune therefore may imply sin or it may not. And if it does not imply sin it may give rise to needless distress and scruples. Mothers therefore can do much both to protect their daughters' chastity, and to preserve their peace of mind, by explaining to them clearly these circumstances of womanhood. The question has been asked: Who is to instruct those children who have no parents, or whose parents are unfitted for the task? For those who have no parents the duty

devolves upon the guardian. For those whose parents are unfitted, the task may be undertaken by the schoolmaster or the priest. But generally speaking it is not advisable that children should associate such instruction with the priest. In the confessional he never speaks of it unless he is asked or unless he has reason to suppose that there is something wrong. It is not right, therefore, for parents or guardians to relegate instruction to the confessional, for it is their duty to anticipate the wrong by giving instruction before the wrong has been done.

With regard to children at boarding schools, there should be some arrangement between parent and teacher. The parent will endeavor to take the lead either before the child is sent to school or during the holidays, and then communicate with the head teacher accordingly.

The time of going out from home to earn a living is an occasion for special warning. Again, there is no need to go into all the details of the dangers of the streets. It will be sufficient to say that grave dangers do exist and that the chief occasion of these dangers is the accepting of acquaintance with unknown men or women. If good relationships have already been established between mother and daughter, then the girl will

willingly tell her mother of any new friendship she may have made.

Whenever there is a question of a girl leaving home for a distant town, and more especially for a foreign country, the mother may well inform her child of the existence of the White Slave Traffic. There are, though, I believe, large numbers of mothers even who do not know of its existence. Let it be said here then that this terrible business is spread all over the world. It consists of tricking young women into houses of ill fame under pretense of finding them situations. The two chief means of enticing girls away are chance acquaintanceships whilst traveling, and advertisements in the newspapers.

Provision has been made for the protection of Catholic girls by an international Catholic society. Whenever, therefore, a girl thinks of taking a situation away from home, and especially if she be going to a foreign country, she should first put herself in communication with this society. The address for the United States is: Secretary, St. Joseph's Home, 47 East 81st Street (between Park and Madison Avenues), New York City.

The address for England is: Hon. Secretary, S. B. G., 304 Vauxhall Bridge Road, Westminster.

CHAPTER XII

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

THE science of education is still young. What is known as "method" in education has made its best development in comparatively recent years. And one of the chief characteristics of this new science is that the best teachers should be appointed to the youngest children. It used to be thought that any one who knew figures and letters could teach the same to a class of babies. But now it has been discovered that the teacher must not only know all about letters and figures, but also all about babies. He must be skilled in the psychology of the child mind. The young intellect may be made or marred forever, according as its first operations are well or ill directed. The boy is the father of the man. The results of child training reach out into youth, manhood, old age, and life eternal. Hence the greatest importance is to be attached to the education of children. Thus it is that educationists are realizing ever more and more the rich content of the principle,

“Train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it.”

If this is true of education in general, it is eminently true of Catholic education in particular. The future of the Catholic Church in any country depends on the Catholic education of the children. “Give me the children of England and I will make England Catholic.” That was one of the favorite sentiments of the late Cardinal Manning. And as so much concerning Catholic education pertains to family life, all Catholic parents ought to know the leading principles. In the field of politics the education of the people plays a very important rôle. And in scarcely any country of the world does the Church have its full desire in the matter. It nevertheless continues to work for its ideal, a completely Catholic education for every Catholic child.

Education, in the best sense of the word, is the formation of habits. The formation of good habits is good education. The formation of bad habits is bad education. Education is not merely the acquisition of knowledge. The necessity of examination, especially competitive examinations, is largely responsible for the impression which identifies erudition and education. Mere erudition, however, is only a small part of education.

It pertains to the faculty of memory. Now, the memory must be trained, but not only the memory. All the powers of the child must be brought out to the highest perfection possible. Its intellect must be trained to perceive the truth. Its senses, internal and external, must be trained to perceive what is beautiful. And, above all, its will must be trained to do what is good. Moreover, since the soul, while in this life, depends on the body for its due operation, the body also must be so trained as to keep in a healthy condition. "A sound mind in a sound body" is an axiom as old as the hills. A training in the fundamental laws of hygiene, therefore, is ministrant to the training of the child's intellectual, esthetical, and moral faculties.

Further, since man is destined to an eternal life and must attain that eternal life through a life of the spirit in this world, all his natural powers must be made ministrant to this spiritual life. His bodily health, his habits of memory, feeling, taste, intellect, and will must be so trained and directed as to bring forth the best possible fruits in the spiritual life. The supernatural is that which is built on the natural, not that which is built up in mid-air above—separated from the natural. The two merge, one into the other, in such a way that the natural becomes supernatural-

ized, the psychic becomes spiritualized. In modern parlance the training of the natural faculties, without regard to their supernatural destiny, is called secular education. It is an education adapted merely to the affairs of this world. On the other hand, the training of the natural faculties with a view to their supernatural destiny, is called religious education. It is an education adapted to the life of the spirit both here and hereafter.

From the foregoing fact certain principles follow which have an important bearing on present-day educational questions. If man is destined to an eternal life, then he cannot be satisfied with a merely secular education. If grace is ever playing around nature and spiritualizing it, then, under such circumstances, nature will not be satisfied with merely natural occupations and interests. Being spiritualized by a supernatural gift, it must seek a supernatural end and live a supernatural life. A father, then, who leaves a child to choose its own religion, and make its first efforts in spirituality, only in after years does the child a grievous wrong. What should we say of a father who only taught his child to walk and did not teach it to use its hands, on the assumption that it would learn that better in its age of discretion? Yet

that, and something worse, is what the father does when he leaves the child to choose its own religion. He leaves its spiritual limbs undeveloped, rudimentary, useless. And, since to the Catholic the Catholic religion is the divinely appointed means by which the spiritual life is developed, the Catholic father does his child a grievous wrong if he does not provide it with the best Catholic education possible.

Again, if, on the one hand, secular education ought to be spiritualized by the Catholic faith, on the other hand Catholic education should avail itself of the advantages of secular subjects. The Catholic religion being the revelation of Truth itself must appeal to the faculty which has truth for its object. Being a reasonable religion it must appeal to the reason. The more the reason is cultivated, therefore, the better is it able to apprehend the divine revelation. If, as some educationists hold, Euclid and Latin composition are the best means of making a boy think, then proficiency in Euclid and Latin composition must be a help in giving the boy a grasp of his religion.

Again, the Catholic religion is the religion of the highest morality. It is the religion which is marked out above all others by its fruitfulness in moral goodness, its production of saints. It must,

therefore, appeal to that faculty which has goodness for its object. It must appeal to the will as affording it the widest arena for its exercise and satisfaction, nothing less than the striving for the perfect imitation of Jesus Christ. It must appeal to the will also, as affording it the strength to arrive at moral perfection, the strength which comes through the grace of the seven Sacraments.

The stronger, then, a man's will is, the more perfectly it is exercised in the natural virtues, so much the more fitted is it to avail itself of the helps to supernatural action. Once more, the Catholic religion is a beautiful religion. It must, therefore, appeal to the faculty which has beauty for its object, the esthetic sense. All sound training in the fine arts, therefore, whether in music, painting, or literature, may be used for the development of the finest and most difficult of all arts, the art of saintliness, the art which absorbs at once all the power of intellect, will, and feeling, the art which expresses the greatest inspirations of truth, goodness, and beauty.

Much too often do we hear people talk as if piety and intellectual proficiency were incompatible accomplishments. Ability in the arts and sciences is supposed to be an occasion of intellectual pride. So it is. The piety, however, which affects to

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despise these gifts of God is the occasion of a worse sin, the sin of spiritual pride. The natural as well as the supernatural is the creation of Almighty God. And if the Catholic school is to fulfill its mission it must aim at proficiency in the natural as well as the supernatural, in the natural for the sake of the supernatural.

The high aim and nature of Catholic education postulates some important principles in its administration. We come now to consider, then, the relationships between the school and the family, the school and the Church, the school and the State. The schoolmaster, the parent, the bishop, and the statesman, all have something to say in the matter of the conduct of the Catholic school. The question is complicated, admits of different opinions as to details, and, therefore, cannot be solved off-hand or dogmatically. There are, however, certain leading principles about which the Catholic can have no doubt, and which he must keep clearly before his mind in his efforts to adjust the various claims.

The first and most important principle is that the children belong to the parent under God. They do not belong to the State. Certain States, or rather certain statesmen, claim this right of possession. The Catholic can never admit it. The

parents are the authors of the child's body and the parents' wills are the occasion of the creation of the child's soul. The parents, therefore, have confided to their care the nourishment and the education of their children. The mother is fitted by nature for the bearing, the nursing, and the education of children in their earliest years. The father is fitted by nature for providing for the maintenance of all during these years, and providing for the continuance of the education in after years. The State has nothing whatever to do with the possession of the children.

The State exists for the welfare of the temporal interests of the nation. If, therefore, the temporal interests of the nation demand a certain standard of education in the youth of the nation, the State has the right to require such an education from the parents. And in default of the parents fulfilling this obligation, the State has a right to administer such education itself. In doing so, however, it must respect the higher interests of religion.

The children belong to the parents under God. The parents, therefore, have the right to dictate to the State as to the religion in which the children are to be brought up. The parents, moreover, if they are Catholics, have the duty of submitting

to the guidance of the Church in the adjusting of the religious and secular claims.

The conditions of present-day society make it generally convenient that the State should provide at least the elementary, and, for the most part, the secondary and higher education of the country. The fact of the government being democratic or monarchical makes no difference to the Catholic principle. Both are compatible with it. Whether as a representative body carrying out the will of the people, or as an absolute monarch carrying out his own will, the ruling body has only the right to administer secular education in so far as it is compatible with the religious education of the children. So long as this principle is saved, there may be much give and take on both sides. The parents must reserve to themselves the right to say what religion shall be taught to the children.

The parents, however, are not absolute masters of their own children. The Power who created all men has the possession of all men. The parents, therefore, must educate their children according to the will of God. To the Catholic this means that he must be guided by the Church. Governments, however, do not treat with individuals, but with representatives of all. Individual

members of Parliament or Congress treat with individual Catholics at election time. That is the opportunity for the Catholic's action, but even then it must be according to the advice of the bishop. But when it comes to a conference between the State as a body and the Church as a body, then the bishops assume their right to say what are the Church's requirements. Catholic statesmen have no right whatever to make terms with governments, except with the consent and under the direction of the episcopate.

Owing to diversity of religions and diversity of races, nearly every country in the world holds a different arrangement between the Church and the State. So the Catholic teacher often finds it difficult to adjust the claims of the various parties which in different degrees he represents. He may be engaged directly by the parent, as in the case of a private tutor or governess; or by the State, as in the State schools of the United States; or by the Church, as in the parochial schools and colleges of higher education in this country; or by both State and Church combined, as in the denominational schools in England. And when he enters into his engagement he is bound in honor to keep to the terms of his engagement.

In most cases, however, he is allowed a certain

amount of freedom. It is the head teacher of the school who gives the tone to the school. It is well, then, that he should keep before his mind the ideal at which he ought to aim in so far as is consistent with the terms of his engagement. It is well that Catholics who have a vote in his appointment should have this ideal before their minds. And it is well that non-Catholics should have the Catholic ideal set before them.

Now the chief characteristic of this ideal is that the teacher, whether he be paid by the parents or by the Church or by the State, is primarily and essentially continuing the work of the parents and not directly that of the Church or of the State. The very existence of the teacher depends only on the assumption of the parents not being able to carry out the work of education themselves. Of course, in so far as the parents are bound to act under the direction of the Church or the State, so is the teacher. But directly his ideal is to carry out the work which essentially belongs to the parents and which they cannot conveniently perform without him.

The Catholic school, therefore, since it is merely a continuation of the family life, and exists merely to help the family to fulfill its destiny, will have its spirit and tone and plans arranged accordingly.

Its first principle will be to aim at training the children for future family life.

Schools taught by religious or clergy are not primarily schools for religious or priestly vocations. Doubtless it is the duty of such religious and clergy to watch carefully for vocations, and to see that no hindrance is put in the way. But they must ever remember that a vocation is an extraordinary gift, whilst marriage is a Sacrament and intended for the generality of men. A school, therefore, whether fitted for elementary, middle, or higher education, whether taught by religious or laity, should be characterized by its likeness to family life. When St. Ignatius conceived and formulated his idea of Jesuit colleges, he did not intend those wonderful boarding establishments, such as Stonyhurst and Beaumont, Georgetown and Fordham. He wished to have day colleges so that the pupils should remain as much as possible under the direct influence of parents and home.

But boarding colleges and convent schools are now a necessity. There is, however, a more stringent obligation on them of approximating as nearly as possible to the family ideal. This is more especially necessary in the schools for girls. The prevailing spirit of these schools should be

that of training the future mothers of Catholic families.

The mother is the priestess of the home. She it is who holds the home together. She is the all-important factor in developing the ideal of Catholic family life. Personal piety will be her first accomplishment. Then will come the ordinary school subjects, with "extras," according to the future social status of the child. Then she must be taught how to play. We have hardly yet begun to learn the gospel of Froebel: "Let us teach our children to play." Cricket and tennis and drill have their place, and so has the doll and the doll's house. Then, as the school years draw to an end there are the important subjects of cookery and housekeeping. The Catholic school that neglects these fails to grasp one of its grandest opportunities of furthering its noble aims; that is, of strengthening the family life, of making the nation more Catholic, of hastening the coming of the kingdom of God.

From the foregoing principles there follow some practical conclusions. Parents will first strive to realize that, since the education of children primarily belongs to them, and only by delegation to the teachers, they, the parents, have the obligation of seeking out the most suitable school for their

children. The nearest school is not necessarily the most suitable. Nor is the cheapest. The school must first of all be Catholic. Then, in the case of elementary education, the school of the parish or mission will generally be found to be efficient. The elementary school of one's own parish, therefore, has the first claim upon a parent's consideration.

In the case of middle class or higher education, the parents will choose by preference a day high school or college. Then, if the circumstances of the family require a boarding-school or college, the idea of home life will receive the chief consideration. If the future circumstances of the children are such that they can dispense with examinations, then a school which is exempt from public examinations is better than one subject to them. The majority of children, however, require paper qualifications for their start in professional studies. The Catholic parent need have no fear whatever as to the proficiency of Catholic schools in securing excellent results at examinations.

Having used their utmost discretion in the choice of a school, the parents will do well not to meddle with the teacher. An obvious irregularity may arise, in which case it is the parents' duty to act. But, generally speaking, the head master

or the head mistress of the school must be trusted to do what is best for the child. To change the school, even once, unnecessarily, is to set back the child's education. To be ever taking the child's part against the teacher is simply to ruin the child's character. Nevertheless the parent should exercise a supervision over the child's school career. If the child is backward and there does not appear sufficient reason to account for that, it should be medically examined for adenoids.

Lastly, if the children are to be educated by a private governess, then the parents must form the habit of mind, and the children and the governess herself must feel it, that she is, as a member of the family, strictly *in loco parentis*, entitled to deep respect and consideration. She is not called in as a household drudge, but as one even more qualified than the parents themselves to fulfill their high vocation of forming the characters of children, of making them Catholic in mind and in heart, of leading them to their eternal destiny.

The same principle of parental responsibility holds good with regard to ecclesiastical authorities, who undertake the burden of providing a Catholic education for Catholic families. If the State so far neglects its duty that the Church has to provide elementary schools, then the parents

ought to support these schools generously. It is not right to allow the priest to go and beg, beg, beg, to support a work which is essentially the work of parents.

So, too, with the high schools and colleges. It ought to be quite unnecessary to say it, yet under the circumstances one must say it, parents ought to pay their school bills regularly and promptly. The work done by such schools and colleges is infinitely more valuable than the money outlay for their material support. It is the least that parents can do to see that the work is not hampered by what so frequently happens, the accumulation of bad debts. The work is God's work, and those who are primarily responsible for it are the parents of families. They have received the Sacrament of marriage. They have received the graces to bear its burdens. It is not an easy state of life. But with the graces which the Sacrament confers the married pair are made strong for all exigencies, temporal as well as spiritual.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CATHOLIC FAMILY

THE ideal of the Catholic family has been once fully realized. There have been many good examples, all more or less approaching the ideal. But all except one must be regarded as having failed, at least in some respects, to achieve the perfection of family life. That one, of course, is the Holy Family of Nazareth. Since, therefore, God has given us the ideal fully realized in the concrete, it is to that rather than the more remote symbols that we must go for our lessons as to what the Catholic family should be. The Word was made flesh to reveal to us the mind of the Eternal Father. In order, then, to learn the mind of the Eternal Father concerning the nature and end of the Catholic family life we cannot do better than turn our thoughts to the little home at Nazareth.

The school of the Apostles was formed by Our Lord during the years of His public ministry. Then, having been organized by Him during His

lifetime, it was fully promulgated and endowed with its special gifts after His death, by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The purpose of the Incarnation was the salvation of souls. The purpose of the Church was the salvation of souls. The purpose of the first Catholic Family was the salvation of souls. The first and foremost purpose, then, of every Catholic family is to obtain for its members the possession of everlasting life. The family does not exist merely for the sake of the love of husband and wife; nor for the love of parent and children; nor for the acquisition of worldly fortunes; nor for the promotion of the children in business; nor for the material prosperity of nations. All these are lawful and subordinate aims, subordinate to the final aim which is to help immortal souls to get to heaven. This is the first and, in a sense, the only lesson to be learned from the Holy Family of Nazareth; the purpose of the Catholic family is the undoing of sin, the hindrance of sin, the propagation of those truths and virtues which lead to life eternal.

The child Jesus grew in wisdom and age and grace in the eyes of God and of men. Although possessing the Beatific Vision, and consequently all wisdom, knowledge, and grace, yet Jesus

deemed it expedient to acquire an experimental knowledge of things, to learn from Joseph and Mary the great truths about religion, and how to apply them to the development of the spiritual life. Jesus was the foundation of all grace. He was knowledge itself; He was wisdom itself; but He chose that His wisdom and knowledge and grace should be manifested gradually. He chose to undergo that laborious education to set the example to all Christian families, to show them that it was only by constant teaching and learning that Christian character could be formed. The Christian mother, then, assiduously watches for the first dawn of conscience in her child. She knows, or ought to know, that first impressions are the most effective and most lasting. She delights to take her child on her knees and teach it to pray. Her pride is to show her friends how her little one can say the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary." The time at length comes when the child must be sent to school. There must be no question about the character of the school, it must be Catholic.

The Catholic school will undoubtedly possess a Catholic atmosphere. The constant or frequent presence of priests or religious, the Catholic prayers, the statues and the fixtures, all tend to

keep before the mind of the child the fact that he is a Catholic.

Now the Catholic home ought to be at least as Catholic as the Catholic school. There ought to be prominent signs about the house that it is the abode of a Catholic family. There is a feeling in some families, having pretensions to be up-to-date and fashionable, to regard a religious picture in the drawing-room as out of place. This feeling is generally the fruit of worldliness. It is also, in a measure, due to the large number of inferior pictures which flood the market, those cheap lithographs of the Pope or the bishop, which are a compliment to neither. A zealous father of a Catholic family will make an endeavor to hang up one or two good and really artistic religious pictures. They give a tone to the house, impressing the faith on the minds of the members of the family, and expressing the faith of the family to visitors.

More important even than Catholic art is Catholic literature. These are days when everybody reads or, at least, is supposed to read. And it is notorious that Catholics do not buy books as they should. Our Holy Father has warned us that unless we support a good Catholic press it will be useless for us to build schools and churches. Now,

the Catholic Church is not wanting either in excellent writers or excellent publishers. Our book stores are rich in devotional, scientific, and recreative literature. The crying shame is that so little of this finds its way into the Catholic family. Heads of Catholic families, therefore, ought to see to it at once that there is a shelf for religious literature, that there is a regular subscription to some monthly or quarterly Catholic journal, and, especially among the working classes, a subscription to some Catholic weekly newspaper. It is chiefly through the press that the members of the family learn their relationship to other institutions in the world. The secular press keeps them provided with political news and so constantly reminds them of their civic duties. But the secular press is not an ideal medium for showing the Catholic his duty to the State.

Especially in the matter of education does the Catholic need to know the bearings between the mind of the Church and the mind of the State. And he ought to know this not only on general principles, but also in the application of those principles to the particular circumstances of his country. He must know what the bishops have said, what the government has done to this or that particular school or college, and what the govern-

ment proposes to do with schools and colleges in the future. In a word, he must be alive to his duties as a Catholic citizen. The family life is the foundation of true citizenship. Since, therefore, the Catholic press is the means by which the Catholic learns the bearings between the family, the Church, the State, the Catholic press ought to be an institution in every Catholic household.

“And Jesus went down with them, and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them.” Order is said to be heaven’s first command. If, on the other hand, love be said to be the first and final law of heaven, the statement must be qualified by making the love a well-ordered love. Even sin is only love out of order, the love of something contrary to the Divine Will. So also in the family life love must be the ruling principle, but it must be a well-ordered love. Our Lord, therefore, in order to teach us this lesson went down with His parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. Nowhere outside the bosom of the Blessed Trinity was a triple love so perfect as that love between Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Yet St. Joseph was the head and ruler of the family. It was St. Joseph who was told to fear not, but take Mary to be his spouse. It was St. Joseph who was told by the angel to arise and take the Child and His mother

and flee into Egypt. It was St. Joseph who was divinely commanded to return and take Mary and Jesus to Nazareth. Although Mary was so much spiritually exalted over Joseph, yet Joseph was to be the ruler of the family. And although Jesus was so much spiritually exalted over Joseph and Mary, yet in the family He was to be subject to both.

Here, then, is the rule for the Catholic family. The father is to be supreme ruler, the mother is to rule in her sphere under him, the children are to be subject to both. Moreover, the subjection of the children is not to be a slavish subjection, but a filial subjection. It must be informed by love rather than by fear. There must, of course, be a certain fear present in the children, but a reverential fear, a fear by which one is afraid of offending love, rather than a fear by which one is afraid of punishment. Further, the obedience of children is not unlimited. If parents command anything contrary to divine law the duty of the children is to disobey. In cases of doubt, however, the presumption is in favor of the parents. But wherever there is a question of family interest or domestic arrangements the will of the parents must be obeyed. It is not for children to say which school they shall go to, to say where the family shall take up its abode, to say at what hour

the family shall dine, to say what time they shall come in at night. These are points upon which children frequently mistake their place in the family, points in which they are obviously subject to their parents.

There comes a time, too, when children grow up. The relationships between them and their parents then become somewhat modified. Nevertheless, there still remain the duties of reverence and love. The children are free to choose their own states of life. In this they are not bound to follow the wishes of their parents, but they are bound to consult their parents and to weigh the considerations which they put forth. Then, later, when the parents are overtaken with old age, the children are bound in cases of necessity to support them.

The Holy Family at Nazareth was very poor. Consequently we cannot look to it directly for an example in the question of servants. But we can easily imagine how Our Lady would have acted did she have need to call in a little extra help now and then. We shall only fall short of the mark when we do our best with our imagination, to picture the kind and gentle consideration which Our Lady would have shown to any one who did her a service. From that picture, how-

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ever, we may get some hints as to the relationship between masters, or rather mistresses, and servants in the circumstances of modern society. The servants of to-day are not on a level with the children of the household; nor yet are they on a level with the slaves of an ancient Roman household. They are not the goods and chattels of those who employ them. Their service is that of free contract. And it is something more. Since the servants live in the house, the house is, in a sense, their home.

It is the duty, therefore, of the mistress of the house to arrange matters for the servants in such a way that they shall feel that they have a home. They must have opportunities for their religious duties, whether they be Catholic or Protestant. They must have a reasonable amount of opportunity for recreation. They must have their wages paid promptly. A mistress can insist upon her servants being kept up to the mark in their work, and yet insist kindly. And she will do well to examine her conscience frequently as to how often she has engaged in gossip about the servants' faults. There are some women who can spend whole afternoons and evenings talking on that and no other topic. If a servant is so bad she has no longer any right to be in the place.

A word should be said, too, as to the treatment of servants in illness. They cannot expect the same affection as the children; but since they are members of the household they ought, at least, have the attendance of the family physician, and all things necessary to get them well again. Here is a point where Catholic wives may set an example to the generality of society dames. The servant may not be set above the head of her mistress, but neither may she be trampled under foot.

From the principles of order and superiority and subjection in the family there arises the duty of the parents, and especially of the father, of providing for the material well-being of the children. There is an impression prevalent that worldly success and Roman Catholicism are not compatible. And it is certainly true that in many Protestant communities the Catholic is at a disadvantage. That is only an extra reason why Catholics should make themselves more proficient in their respective trades and professions. If a Catholic lawyer, or doctor, or engineer, excels in his own vocation, then Protestant, Jew, and Infidel, will engage him in preference. And if he shines in his Catholicity as he does in his profession, then the cause of Catholicity will benefit in proportion.

The father of the Catholic family, therefore, must provide his children with a good secular education. The school must be Catholic, but it must likewise be efficient in its secular subjects. Piety must come before worldly success, but it need not be allowed to supplant it. We have schools in abundance, schools as efficient as any secular schools in the country. There is no need to go outside the Church, though there may be need to use discrimination within the Church. And this discrimination is the office of the parents of the family.

We may sum up, then, the principles of Catholic family life thus: The family is the foundation of the State, and the strength and purity of the State depend on the strength and purity of the family. The family, however, is not the foundation of the Church, but is rather the child of the Church, taking its instructions from the Church, and existing primarily for the same end as the Church, namely, the salvation of souls. It should, therefore, be Catholic in its faith, Catholic in its hope, and Catholic in its love. The Catholic faith will be fostered by ceaseless attention to the Sacraments, to Catholic education during youth, and Catholic instruction through the press during manhood. From Catholic faith and hope will spring Catholic love. This will be made ever more and

more fruitful by being kept in order, the father and mother ruling by love, the children obeying through love. The endeavor must be made to carry these Catholic principles into the world of business and professions, and to show to the non-Catholic world that religion and intellectual efficiency are not incompatible; nay, to show that only by the observance of the law of religion can the family, and consequently the State, achieve the perfection which it desires.

